



Sample Interview Questions

An interview provides the hiring manager a perfect opportunity to identify the applicant best qualified and best suited for the organization. Conducted properly, it is a valuable tool in the hiring process.

Prior to the interview:

As you prepare for the interview consider the following:

- Be prepared (develop a list of questions to be utilized for all applicants in the same job)
- Ask open-ended questions
- Refrain from asking any questions about age, sex, ethnic origin, race, religion or political beliefs, and medical conditions/disabilities.

During the interview:

- Record the applicant's responses
- Introduce yourself and your position
- Briefly describe the organization structure
- Describe the position the applicant is applying for
- Explain that you will be taking notes during the interview to assist you in remembering their responses
- Explain that all applicants will be asked the same questions
- Ask the applicant if he/she has any questions

After the interview has concluded:

- Thank them for coming to the interview
- Explain that you are in the interviewing phase
- Explain that you will be making a decision within the next ____ days/weeks/months
- Inform them if they will be asked to come back for a second interview
- Inform them whether or not they will/will not be contacted if they are not chosen for the position. (You can refer them to the HR website/STARS system to monitor their job status).

Sample Job Interview Questions You May Use

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

What five adjectives describe you best?

Why should I consider you for this position?

Why are you the best candidate for this position?

Tell me about the one thing in your life you're proudest of.

You've changed jobs frequently. What makes you think that this position will be different?

What qualities do you think are necessary to make a success of this job?

Describe your ideal job.

How did you find out about this job?

What do you know about the job?

What do you know about the UTSA/this department?

Is there anything that will prevent you from getting to work on time?

Is there anything that will prevent you from working the job's regular hours?

What kinds of work interest you the most?

What interests you most about this position?

NEW GRADUATE QUESTIONS

What extracurricular activities were you involved in?
What activities did you enjoy the most?
What classes did you enjoy the most? The least?
Why did you choose your major?
Why did you change majors?
If you could start again, what major would you choose?
Why are you applying for a job in a field other than your major?
What did you learn from your summer jobs?
In what courses did you get the worst grades? Why?
Are your grades a good measure of your ability?
Give me an example of a problem you've had at school and how you solved it.
How does your degree prepare you (a) for a career in [industry] or (b) to excel as a [job title]?
What qualifications do you have beyond academics that qualify you to make a successful transition into business?

PERSONAL MOTIVATION & TRAITS

How do you feel about your present workload?
What motivates you to do your best work?
How can we best help you get your job done?
Tell me about a time you went "out on a limb" to get the job done.
What are the disadvantages of this line of work?
What do you find most frustrating at work?
Tell me about a project that got you really excited.
How do you define doing a good job?
What makes a job enjoyable for you?
Under what conditions do you work best?
What is your greatest strength/weakness or deficiency?
Tell me about a work task you enjoy.

GENERAL PAST JOB PERFORMANCE/EXPERIENCE

Tell me about your last position and what you did.
Tell me about the last time you made a mistake and how you corrected it.
If you don't leave your current job, what will happen there? How far can you advance?
Of all the work you have done, where have you been most successful?
I see you were unemployed for a period of time. Tell me about it.
Give me an example of when you've demonstrated your customer service skills.
How do you define continuous improvement? What is the last new procedure you integrated into your job?
What makes you stand out among your peers?
What have you done to reduce your department's operational costs or to save time?
What would your current supervisors say makes you most valuable to them?
If I asked your boss to evaluate your performance, what would he or she say?
Have you held positions similar to this one? If so, tell me about them.
What is the most important thing you learned at a previous job?
What did/do you enjoy most/least about your last/present job?
If there were two things you could have changed about that job, what would they be?
How did your job change while you held it?
Describe your supervisor's management style.
What kinds of people do you deal with on the job?
What qualifications do you have that make you successful in this field?
What have you learned from previous jobs?
Describe a typical day at work.
How have your previous positions prepared you for this one?
What parts of your job do you consider most important?
What job tasks do you feel most successful doing?
What special skills or knowledge have you gained to help in this job?
Describe an important project you worked on.
What sort of person do you enjoy working for?
Define excellent customer service.

You have a lot of experience. Why would you want this job?
What do you consider your greatest strength?
What is your most significant professional accomplishment?
What was the last job related book you read?
What was your favorite job? Why?
You've stayed with the same organization for years. Why have you decided to leave?

SOFTWARE/TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

What types of office equipment have you used?
Tell me about the types of word processing you did on your last job.
What would you say are the major technical skills needed for this position?
How do you merge a file in Microsoft Word?
What certifications/classes have you completed this last year? Were any of them required by your supervisor?
Describe the types of documents you deal with on a daily basis.
What software programs do you use most often in your current position?
Describe in detail your experience with computer software programs.
Tell me about the spreadsheets you have created.
Give me an example of a technical problem you had to solve. How did you implement the solution?
Tell me about the PowerPoint presentations you have developed.
What software do you have experience with? How would you describe your experience level for that software?

GOALS

What are your 5-year goals?
Tell me what "success" means to you.
Do you consider yourself successful?
What does "failure" mean to you?
Do you set goals for yourself and how do you do that?

SUPERVISORY QUESTIONS

You have supervised people in the past. What were their titles and what type of supervision did you give them?
How do you motivate people?
Have you ever fired anyone? What were the circumstances?
Have you ever hired anyone? Why did you choose them?
What do you do when you're having trouble with an employee?
What type of supervisory training have you completed in the last two years?
How did you communicate bad news to your staff?
What makes someone a good supervisor?
Who reports to you? What are their job functions?
What is the employee turnover rate in your area?
What do you think is the reason for this rate?
What programs have you put in place to build morale?
How do you plan your day?
Describe your management style.
How do you measure success as a supervisor?
How do you decide who needs what training?
How do you measure success in training?
If you are hired, what will you do in your first 30 days?
Describe one change you made in your last job that was very beneficial.
Describe a time when you and your supervisor disagreed on how to accomplish a goal.
Describe a change you made in your job that you feel is innovative or that you are very proud of.
How do you handle unpopular management decisions?
How do you proceed when you need to make a decision and no policy exists?
How would you define "leadership"?
Describe a time when you were able to influence an outcome in a positive way.
What have you done to become more effective in your job?
How do you orient new employees to your department?
How do you plan an interview?
What do you look for on resumes and applications?
What criteria do you use for making decisions on hiring?

JOB PERFORMANCE

What were your most significant accomplishments at your last job?

What is the biggest failure you've had in your career? Why do you believe it was your biggest failure?

What were your three most important responsibilities in your last job?

What was the most important project you worked on in your last job and why did you choose this example?

Describe how you have progressed through the ranks and landed in your current position at ABC Company?

How have you added value to your job over time?

How have you had to reinvent or redefine your job to meet your companies changing needs?

What proactive steps did you have to take to increase the output of your position?

COMMUNICATION

Tell me about a work situation you had that required excellent communication skills.

Do you prefer to speak directly with someone or send a memo?

How would you grade your ability to communicate with upper level management, customers, and peers?

What was more important on your job, written or oral communication?

FLEXIBILITY

Tell me about the last change which occurred in your office. How did you handle it?

I'm interested in hearing about the last time you took a risk. What was it and in retrospect, was it the right decision?

How important is communication and interaction with others on your job? How many departments did you deal with? What problems occurred?

Tell me about a time when a work emergency caused you to reschedule your work/projects.

Give me an example of the last time you went above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done

In what areas do you typically have the least amount of patience at work?

STRESS

Tell me about a deadline you had to meet. How much advance notice did you have?

You have worked in a fast paced environment. How did you like the environment?

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

What is the most difficult work situation you have faced?

What types of jobs do you have the most difficulty with?

What do you do when you have a great deal of work to accomplish in a short period of time?

What do you do when you're having trouble with your job?

ORGANIZATION/TIME MANAGEMENT

Describe the top of your desk.

Tell me about the last time you failed to complete a project on time.

What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?

What do you do when things are slow/hectic?

What do you do when you have multiple priorities?

Tell me about your typical day. How much time do you spend on the phone? In meetings? Etc.

Your supervisor left you an assignment, then left for a week. You can't reach him/her and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?

How do you organize and plan for major projects?

Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.

How do you organize yourself for day-to-day activities?

Tell me about a task you started but just couldn't seem to get finished.

COOPERATION WITH CO-WORKERS

What types of people have trouble getting along with you?

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

Tell me about the last time you had a conflict with a co-worker, what was the conflict and how did you resolve it?

How would your co-workers describe you?

The successful candidate for this position will be working with individuals who have been with the company for a long time. How will you mesh with them?

What kind of people did you have contact with on your previous jobs (titles/positions)?

What kind of person do you get along with the best?

Define cooperation.

Tell me about an occasion when, in difficult circumstances, you pulled a team together.

What do you find most challenging in working with co-workers?

Do you function more effectively as a team member or as an individual contributor?

Describe the most difficult customer you have dealt with. What was the situation and how did you handle it?

Describe a group project you were recently involved in. Describe your role, the purpose of the project, how you handled differences of opinion. What was your outcome?

What do you do when you know you are right and others disagree with you?

How do you build consensus?

Define teamwork.

MANAGEABILITY

What do you do when you're having trouble with a boss?

If your boss knew you were interviewing, what would he say?

What do you feel an employer owes an employee?

Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is dead wrong. What do you do?

If your supervisor unfairly criticized you, what would you do?

Would you like to have your boss's job? Why or why not?

Tell me about a time when your manager was in a rush and didn't give you enough attention.

What are some of the things about which you and your boss disagree?

What are some of the things your boss did that you disliked?

In what areas could your boss have done a better job?

I would be interested to hear about an occasion when your work or an idea was criticized, what was criticized, who criticized you, and how did you handle it?

Describe the best manager you ever had. The worst. What qualities did each of them have?

SENIOR MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

Give me an example of your ability to facilitate progressive change within your organization.

How do you typically stay in the information loop and monitor your staff's performance?

How do you typically confront subordinates when results are unacceptable?

What kind of mentoring and training style do you have?

Do you naturally delegate responsibilities, or do you expect your direct reports to come to you for added responsibilities?

How would you describe the amount of structure, direction, and feedback that you need to excel?

In terms of managing your staff do you "expect" more than you "inspect" or vice versa?

Tell me about a method you've developed for accomplishing a task.

What could you have done to be more effective at a previous job?

Tell me about a time you were placed in charge of a group of people.

What did you like about being in charge?

What did you not like about being in charge?

PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING

Describe the most difficult problem you had to solve. What was the situation and what did you do? Would you do anything different next time?

In general, how do you handle conflict?

Describe a creative solution that you have developed to solve a problem.

What solution are you the proudest of?

Describe a time when you had to use fact-finding skills.

What has been your most important work-related idea?
 Who or what caused you the most trouble in implementing your ideas?
 What kinds of problems do you normally experience in a day?
 Tell me about a situation that got out of control. How did you handle it?
 Describe the best/worst co-worker you've ever had.
 Tell me about something you achieved as a group member.
 How would you define a good working atmosphere?
 Tell me about a time you came up with a new idea. Were you able to get it approved? If so, how did you go about it?
 Can you think of a time an idea of yours was rejected? Tell me about it.
 Tell me about a time an idea or task of yours was criticized.
 Tell me about a time you had to work according to a policy you disagreed with.
 How do you go about making important decisions?
 Tell me about the last time you made a good decision and describe what it was and what the results were.
 Tell me about an important decision or judgment call you've had to make on the job.
 Describe the worst decision you ever made and how you corrected it.

QUESTIONS ON BUSINESS AFFAIRS GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

- **We respect and care for each other.**
 - Tell us about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspective.
 - Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?
 - Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it. What was the outcome? How did you feel about it?
- **We partner to deliver excellent service.**
 - Tell us about a work experience where you had to work closely with others. How did it go? How did you overcome any difficulties?
 - What do you do to show people that you are listening to them?
 - Can you give an example of a successful team endeavor in the workplace?
- **We value and empower people.**
 - Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
 - Give an example of how you have been successful at empowering either a person or a group of people into accomplishing a task.
- **We create positive change.**
 - Can you think of a situation where innovation was required at work? What did you do in this situation?
 - Tell us about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked. What was the result?
- **We do the right thing.**
 - Give me an example of when you were responsible for an error or mistake. What was the outcome? What, if anything, would you do differently?
 - On occasion we are confronted by dishonesty in the workplace. Tell about such an occurrence and how you handled it.
 - Tell us about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.

***For Hiring Managers in Business Affairs**

NEVER Ask These Questions in a Job Interview!

QUESTIONS ON AGE

How old are you?

When did you graduate from high school? College?

QUESTIONS ON SEX

Are you married?

Do you intend to get married?

Do you have children?

Are you a single parent?

Do you practice birth control?

Do you live by yourself?

How many people live in your household?

Do you have someone who can take care of a sick child?

What's your sexual orientation?

Are you straight?

Do you have a maiden name?

Where does your spouse work?

QUESTIONS ON ETHNIC ORIGIN/RACE

What's your nationality?

Where are your parent's from?

What languages do your parents speak?

Are you bilingual? (unless job related)

What language do you speak at home?

What's the origin of your name?

QUESTIONS ON RELIGION/POLITICAL BELIEFS

What church are you a member of?

Can you work Sundays? Saturdays?

Are you a member of a religious group?

With what political party are you affiliated?

QUESTIONS ON DISABILITIES

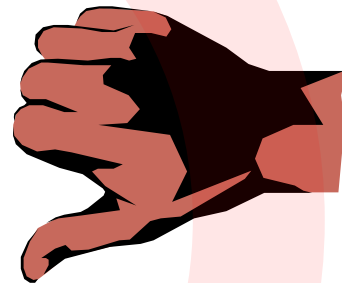
What health problems do you have?

Can you read small print? (Unless job related)

Do you have any back problems?

When were you in the hospital last?

Do you have any medical problems?



If you have any questions about this information, please contact the Employment Office at hr@utsa.edu or 210-458-4250.