

# Sample Interview Questions

This guide contains sample interview questions that can be used, as is, or that can be tailored to the specific needs of a department or position. The majority of the questions are behavior-based questions (i.e. What did you do in X scenario?) as opposed to hypothetical, situational questions (i.e. What would you do if faced with X scenario?). While situational questions can be useful, it's easier for candidates to provide good, "safe" responses based on what they think an interviewer's expectations are. Behavior-based questions, on the other hand, elicit specific examples of past actions which can help in evaluating how a candidate would behave or react in the future. (A list of example situational questions can be found in Appendix 1.)

This guide is organized by job-related competencies, listed in alphabetical order. Within each competency's section, there's a list of possible behavioral indicators as well as sample interview questions. The behavioral indicators serve as a guide in evaluating the extent to which candidates have demonstrated proficiency in a particular competency. Although these behavioral indicators can be used, as is, it's recommended that interviewers/committees use them as a starting point for developing detailed rating scales that include examples of different levels of responses (i.e. Average responses to the question related to competency Y are characterized by A,B, C, while exceptional responses are characterized by D,E, F).

When conducting interviews, it is best practice to conduct all interviews in the same manner and ask the same initial questions to everyone so that each candidate has the same opportunity to respond. It is fine to ask additional, follow-up questions when needed as long as they are relevant to the job, you are treating each candidate as fairly and equally as possible, and as long as you are avoiding questions that could prompt claims of discrimination or bias. Please refer to the "Illegal Interview Questions Guide" in Appendix 2 for detailed information on the types of questions that interviewers/committees absolutely SHOULD NOT ask.

Feel free to contact your assigned Human Resources consultant with any questions related to this guide.

## Table of Contents

Achievement/Goal Setting .....	4
Adaptability .....	5
Analytical Thinking/Reasoning.....	6
Attention to Detail .....	7
Collaboration/Teamwork .....	8
Communication Skills.....	10
Listening .....	10
Reading Comprehension.....	10
Verbal.....	11
Written .....	12
Conflict Management and Resolution .....	14
Continuous Learning .....	15
Customer Service.....	16
Decision Making .....	18
Diversity – Leveraging/Valuing.....	20
Financial/Budget Administration .....	21
Initiative .....	23
Innovation.....	24
Integrity .....	25
Interpersonal Skills.....	26
Management .....	27
Change Management .....	27
Delegation.....	27
Employee Development .....	28
Managing Personnel.....	29
Performance Management/ Coaching .....	30
Negotiation/Consensus Building .....	32
Organizational Understanding .....	33
Planning & Organization/ Time Management .....	34
Event Planning.....	35
Project Management.....	35
Problem Solving .....	36
Professionalism.....	37
Risk Taking .....	38
Stress Management.....	39
Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skills .....	40
General.....	40
Research/Faculty.....	40
Sensitive/Confidential Information.....	41
Technical.....	41
Technological Systems.....	41
Appendix 1: Situational Questions .....	43





## **Achievement/Goal Setting**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Demonstrates concern for achieving or surpassing results against an internal or external standard of excellence. Shows a passion for improving the delivery of services with a commitment to continuous improvement.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Recognizes and capitalizes on opportunities.
- Sets and maintains high performance standards for self and others that support the organization's strategic plan and holds self and other team members accountable for achieving results.
- Tries new things to reach challenging goals and persists until personal and team goals are achieved and commitments met.
- Works to meet individual and organizational goals with positive regard, acknowledgment of, and cooperation with the achievement of others' goals.
- Motivates others to translate ideas into actions and results.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Tell us about an important goal you set in the past and detail the steps that you took in accomplishing it.
- What are your short-term and long-term professional goals? Please tell us about your most significant professional accomplishment.
- Tell us about a time when you had to go above and beyond your normal responsibilities in order to get a job done. What was the result of your actions?
- Describe the single most important accomplishment that you have achieved or been a part of within the past year. What was the level of involvement of your colleagues/supervisor in this accomplishment?
- What efforts have you made in the last year to become a better staff/faculty/administrator?
- Tell us about an occasion when your performance didn't live up to your expectations. (Tough one to answer. Give the candidate points for poise and honesty; and be sure to see whether anything was learned from the situation).
- Have you ever been held accountable for reaching a goal that you knew wasn't possible to attain? What did you do?

# **Adaptability**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Changes behavioral style or method of approach when necessary to achieve a goal; adjusts style as appropriate to the needs of the situation. Responds to change with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn new ways to accomplish work activities and objectives.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Looks for ways to make changes work rather than only identifying why change will not work.
- Adapts to change quickly and easily.
- Makes suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of changes.
- Shows willingness to learn new methods, procedures, or techniques, resulting from departmental or University-wide change.
- Shifts strategy or approach in response to the demands of a situation.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Tell us about a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to a major change over which you had no control. How did you handle this situation?
- Please provide an example of your ability to be consistently flexible and adaptable?
- Tell us about situation in which one of your plans or projects suffered a setback due to unexpected or unforeseen circumstances. How did you react and what was the end result?
- Describe a situation in which your initial attempts to gain someone's support or cooperation failed. Did you try again? If so, what approach did you use the second time?
- Have you worked in an organization which changed its policies or procedures frequently? How did you deal with these changes?
- Describe a time when you felt it was necessary to change your actions or compromise your immediate interests in order to respond to the needs of another person.
- Describe a work situation where customers/clients changed their minds at the last minute. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?
- What do you do when you are faced with an obstacle to an important project? Give an example from your previous work experience.
- Describe a situation where you started off thinking that your approach was the best, but needed to alter your course during the implementation.
- Describe a situation where you were unexpectedly assigned a task that you had never previously attempted. How did you react to the situation, and were you successful in completing the task?
- Please describe a situation in which your organization went through a major technological change/implementation. Describe how this impacted your work, as well as what your action & reaction during the transition was.

## **Analytical Thinking/Reasoning**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Brings a wide range of considerations and perspectives to issues, analyzing a variety of information to make logical, well-reasoned and effective decisions.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Constantly gathers information from a variety of sources to identify issues and opportunities that will impact stakeholders.
- Looks for patterns and trends to develop effective forecasts that help clients make informed choices.
- Develops well-defined, step-by-step approaches to analyze and solve complex problems by collecting information from multiple sources.
- Identifies relevant alternatives and evaluates the potential consequences of each before taking action.
- Distinguishes when a situation requires detailed knowledge versus only a surface-level understanding.
- Brings the widest perspective to issues, contributing a breadth of thinking, including aspects others may have missed.
- Effectively juggles and sorts multi-faceted information when deciding on a course of action, ensuring that plans are aligned with CMHC's strategic direction.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a project or situation which best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role in the project/situation, and what was the outcome?
- Tell us about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through? What was your reasoning behind your decision?
- Tell us about a time when you participated in developing your departmental or organizational business strategy. What was your role? How did you approach it? What was the end result?
- Tell us about a time where you identified a discrepancy or inconsistency in the available information that might have otherwise had a significant negative impact on a plan or project. What were the impacts you identified, and what were your recommendations?

## **Attention to Detail**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Thoroughness in accomplishing a task through concern for all the areas involved, no matter how small. Monitors and checks work/information and plans/organizes time and resources efficiently.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Double-checks the accuracy of information and work product to provide accurate and consistent work.
- Provides information on a timely basis and in a usable form to others who need to act on it.
- Carefully monitors the details and quality of own and others' work.
- Expresses concern that things be done right, thoroughly, or precisely.
- Completes all work according to procedures and standards.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- This job requires excellent attention to detail. Please describe the essential elements of being detail oriented.
- Please give us an example of a situation where you constantly had to be meticulous with details. What strategies or systems did you use to minimize errors in your work?
- What sort of checks and balances do you utilize to ensure accuracy in your written work and in data entry?
- Describe a situation where you discovered a mistake prior to distributing the product (report, letter, etc.). How did you discover the mistake and what action did you take to ensure that it was corrected?
- Please tell us about a mistake that you make in a previous position. What was the impact of this mistake and were you able to resolve the situation? Finally, did you take any steps to prevent similar mistakes from happening in the future?

## **Collaboration/Teamwork**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Develops cooperation and teamwork while participating in a group, working toward solutions which generally benefit all involved parties. Contributes fully to the team effort and plays an integral part in the smooth running of teams without necessarily taking the lead.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Participates willingly in activities as a good role player that works well with others.
- Demonstrates respect for the opinions of others.
- Identifies and advocates for solutions in which all parties can benefit.
- Helps and supports fellow employees in their work to contribute to overall organizational success.
- Keeps people informed and up-to-date.
- Shares information and expertise with others to enable them to accomplish group goals.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- What does being a team player mean to you? Please give us an example of a successful team project you were part of; what was your role; and why was the project successful?
- We've all had to work with someone who is difficult to get along with. Give us an example of when this happened to you, how did you handle the situation and what was the end result?
- Please describe a situation where you had a conflict with an employee/supervisor/co-worker. What was the conflict? How was the issue resolved?
- What actions did you take in your last job to contribute toward a teamwork environment? Be specific.
- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team? What roles are you comfortable taking on?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist him or her? What was the result?
- We cannot do everything ourselves. Give me an example of a time when you dealt with this reality by creating a special team effort at work. Highlight the special aspects of the situation which best demonstrate your skill in this area.
- Describe the most difficult team you worked on, what was your role, and what knowledge have you applied to other situations?
- Describe a time when you coordinated a group in order to complete a task or project.





- Give an example of a time when you gained the commitment of other people to successfully complete a particular assignment or project.
- What is the most difficult part of being a member, not a leader of a team? How do you handle this? Tell us about a situation where you played an important role as a team member, but not as a leader.
- How do you ensure that every member of the team is allowed to participate?
- Give us an example where you worked in a dysfunctional team. Why was it dysfunctional and how did you attempt to change things?
- How do you build relationships with members of your team as well as other stakeholders?



## **Communication Skills**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition - General:**

Communicates effectively, listens sensitively, adapts communication to audience and fosters effective communication with others. Creates an atmosphere in which timely and high-quality information flows smoothly up and down, inside and outside of the University; encourages open expression of ideas and opinions.

### **Listening**

#### **Definition:**

Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

#### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Asks open-ended questions that encourage others to give their points-of-view and is approachable at all times.
- Refrains from immediate judgment and criticism of others' ideas delivers criticism in a way that demonstrates sensitivity to the feelings of others and waits for others to finish their intended message before responding.
- Encourages response and dissent to ideas and issues.

#### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Give us an example when effective listening skills helped you in a problematic situation.
- Tell us about a time when you were asked to summarize complex points that were verbally presented to you.
- Tell us about a time when you had trouble remaining focused on what your audience was trying to communicate to you. How did you handle this?
- Describe a situation when you had to deal with an angry customer. How did you handle the situation and what was the end result?
- Give an example of a time when you made a mistake because you did not listen well to what someone tried to communicate to you. What action did you take to avoid similar situations moving forward?

### **Reading Comprehension**

#### **Definition:**

Ability to understand and accurately interpret written material (including technical material, rules, regulations, instructions, reports, charts, graphs, or tables) apply what is learned to specific situations, and accurately communicate

#### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Takes knowledge/information obtained from written materials and successfully applies it to specific situations.
- Verbally explains written material/ideas to others in an accurate manner.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Tell me about the most complex information you have had to read-perhaps involving research you had to complete. To what extent did this project test your comprehension skills and technical knowledge? Be specific.
- How much reading of new information is required in your current job? How often do you have to expose yourself to new written communications? When did these skills cause you to be a superior performer?

### **Verbal**

#### **Definition:**

Effectively transfers thoughts and expresses ideas orally or verbally in individual or group situations.

#### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Keeps relevant people accurately informed and up-to-date of both positive and potentially negative information.
- Appropriately expresses one's own opinion.
- Presents oneself clearly and articulately when speaking with an individual or before a group assuring that others fully comprehend the intended message.
- Checks for understanding of the communication by asking open-ended questions that draw out the listener's understanding.
- Effectively uses appropriate literature or visual aids during product/service demonstrations or when giving presentations.
- Thinks through material for presentations in advance and organizes presentations in a logical flow.
- Repeats message back to speaker in a way that it is clear that the message is understood.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Give me a specific example of a time when you presented your supervisor with an idea or concept. How did you approach the situation and what was the result?
- Tell us about a time when you had to present difficult and/or complex information to a supervisor, colleague or customer. How did you ensure that the other person fully understood what you were trying to communicate?
- Describe a situation when you had to communicate a message to a supervisor, colleague or customer, knowing that their point of view differed from yours. How did you navigate the situation and what was the end result?
- What experiences have you had with a miscommunication with a customer/employee/supervisor? What happened and how do you solve the problem?

- Have you ever dealt with a professional situation where communication was poor as a result of a lack of cooperation or trust? How did you handle this situation?
- What has been your experience in giving presentations? What steps do you take to ensure that your presentation will be successful?
- What are some of the biggest or most demanding groups you have made presentations to? How do you alter your communication/presentation to fit the corresponding audience?
- What steps do you take in preparing for a meeting where you are attempting to persuade someone on a specific course of action?
- Tell me about the last time you had to "sell" your ideas to others. What did you do that was particularly effective/ineffective? How did others react to you?
- At times we are all faced with the situation of having to tell a customer, co-worker, staff member, supervisor etc. 'NO' because we do not believe that 'Yes' would be the correct answer – even though it would be the easy answer. Tell us about a time when you faced this kind of situation and how you communicated your response.
- What are some of the most complex policy or procedure interpretations you have had to explain to other people?
- The ability to communicate an unpopular decision is always difficult, especially when you do not personally agree with the decision. When have you had to do this and what was the outcome?

## Written

### **Definition:**

Ability to recognize and/or use correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling to produce written information that is succinct, organized, and appropriate for the intended audience. (NOTE: This is best observed by candidates providing examples of their work because it is largely an observable behavior.)

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Provides others with timely, accurate, complete and consistent information.
- Communicates openly, honestly and directly with others, remaining accessible by responding promptly to questions and comments.
- Keeps relevant people accurately informed and up-to-date of both positive and potentially negative information.
- Appropriately expresses one's own opinion in writing.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Give me an example, taken from your experiences in report writing, preparation of memos, or general correspondence which illustrates the extent of your written communication skills.
- This job will require you to spend a large amount of time writing. Tell me about your writing experiences that you think will contribute to your ability to do this job well.

- In some jobs it is necessary to document work thoroughly, in writing. For example, documentation might be necessary to prove you did your job correctly or to train another person to do it. Give me an example of your experiences in this area.
- What positive and negative feedback have you received about your writing skills? Give an example where your written communication was well received, as well as an example of when it was criticized.
- Describe a time when you had to use your written communication skills to get an important point across.
- What are some of the most difficult writing assignments you have been given or have taken on yourself? Explain.
- Have you ever written any procedures or rules for use by a client/customer or by your own organization? Explain.
- What examples can you offer of instances where you have drafted correspondence, minutes or reports?



# **Conflict Management and Resolution**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Brings substantial conflicts and disagreements into the open and attempts to manage them collaboratively, building consensus, keeping the best interests of the organization in mind, not only one's own interest.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Involves others early in the process to get their input and "buy-in" before making decisions that affect them.
- Recognizes conflict and identifies ways to help involved parties work through conflict.
- Identifies areas of agreement when working with conflicting individuals or groups.
- Maintains awareness of broad, longer-term objectives and works to ensure that all parties share this awareness while seeking solutions.
- States own point-of-view without criticizing the other person's.
- Responds to opposing views in a non-defensive manner.
- Detects potential problems and takes action (including reasonable risks where appropriate) to resolve conflicts promptly.
- Creates mutually beneficial solutions to resolve issues.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Give an example of when you "went to the source" to address a conflict. Do you feel trust levels were improved as the result? What would you do differently if a similar situation presented itself?
- Tell us about a situation in which you had to separate a person from an issue when working to resolve a conflict.
- Tell us about a time when you felt that conflict or differences were a positive driving force in your organization. How did you manage the conflict to optimize its benefit?
- Tell us about a situation where conflict led to a negative outcome. How did you handle the situation and what did you learn from it?
- Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a conflict within your team. What action did you take, and were your efforts successful?
- What if someone on your team isn't pulling their weight on a project and it's affecting the speed and quality of the project? How would you handle that type of situation?
- Please explain to us the techniques that you find helpful in dealing with difficult individuals and give an example of when you put these techniques into practice.
- Describe a situation where you had a disagreement or an argument with a superior. How did you approach the situation, and what was the effect on your working relationship with that individual?

## **Continuous Learning**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Demonstrates eagerness to acquire necessary technical knowledge, skills, and judgment to accomplish a result or to serve a customer's needs effectively. Has desire and drive to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to perform job more effectively.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Keeps up-to-date on current research and technology in one's work focus and identifies and pursues areas for development and training that will enhance job performance.
- Takes responsibility for one's own development.
- Maintains fluency in appropriate work applications, software, or tools.
- Reviews, selects, and disseminates information regarding key technologies, best practices, and tools to others in the group.
- Continually looks for ways to expand job capabilities.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a past success or failure. What did you learn from the experience and how have you applied what you learned?
- What have you done to ensure that you stay current on internal and external business issues?
- Tell about a time when you received feedback, either positive or negative, from management or another associate. How did you use this feedback?
- Tell us about a time when you volunteered for an assignment to expand your knowledge and skills.

# **Customer Service**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Ability to project a positive image of an organization to clients, to the public, and meet the needs of the customer in a timely professional manner.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Asks questions to identify the needs or expectations of others.
- Considers the impact on the external or internal customer when taking action, or carrying out one's own job responsibilities.
- Looks for creative approaches to providing or improving services that may increase efficiency and decrease cost.
- Finds opportunities to pass on knowledge and transfer skills to others.
- Takes personal responsibility for resolving service problems brought to one's attention.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- What does the term "customer service" mean to you?
- Describe your "customer service" philosophy in a higher education setting. Can you give us an example of a situation that you provided an excellent job in customer service and what were the end results?
- This position is responsible for the reception area, which includes the front desk and the phones. This is often the first point of contact for our department and it is essential that a positive image is portrayed. If you were hired for this position how would you ensure that students, parents, faculty and staff had a positive experience calling or coming into our office?
- Describe a situation when you encountered a difficult or upset customer. Please describe how you handled the situation. What was the outcome? If the encounter were to reoccur, would you handle it differently? If yes, what would you do differently?
- What skills do you believe are important for dealing effectively with customers? Describe an example when you utilized these skills on a daily basis. What was the result?
- Explain to us what techniques you find helpful in dealing with difficult students and/or customers.
- This position will deal with several different types and levels of individuals. What techniques do you use when managing and/or working with different customers, such as students, faculty, staff and managers?
- You probably have heard the saying, "the customer is always right." Can you tell me about a situation when you felt the customer was *not* right? Please describe how you responded. What was the outcome? What could you have done differently to increase the positive nature of this encounter?
- You are talking to a customer who asks you a difficult question that you cannot answer. What would you do to resolve the customer's question?





- What do you like most about being in customer service? What do you find is the most difficult part of being in customer service?
- Tell us about a time when you were not successful in meeting a customer's needs. Explain why this was the case and what steps you took to correct the situation.
- Tell me how you improve customer service (for yourself, your team). How do you recognize what improvements are needed? Give some examples.
- Role Play Scenario – Create a challenging work related scenario that would commonly be encountered in this particular position and ask the candidate how they would respond. Examples can be found in the Appendix – Situational Questions.

# **Decision Making**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions. Makes decisions authoritatively and wisely, after adequately contemplating various available courses of action.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Considers alternative available actions, resources, and constraints before selecting a method for accomplishing a task or project.
- Refrains from “jumping to conclusions” based on no, or minimal, evidence; takes time to collect facts before decision-making.
- Considers cost and efficiency when making decisions establishing or changing work procedures.
- Considers the long-term as well as immediate short-term outcomes and actions.
- Appropriately balances needs and desires with available resources and constraints.
- Recognizes when to escalate appropriate or specific situations to the next higher level of expertise.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe your approach to making difficult decisions and solving problems, including the specific factors you take into consideration. Please provide examples of successes you’ve had in utilizing this approach.
- Describe a recent example of when you created and implemented a set of actions based on an important decision you made.
- Please describe a situation from your previous work experience where you made a decision that resulted in an undesirable outcome. What would you do differently if a similar situation were to arise again?
- Give an example of a time when you had to delay a decision to reflect on the situation. What additional resources and/or information were required before you could make your final decision?
- Give us an example of a situation where you were asked to make a decision in the absence of your supervisor. How did you handle the situation and what was the outcome?
- Tell us about a time when you were faced with making a decision based on incomplete information. How did you proceed, and what was the final result?
- Tell us about a situation where you made a decision that had unintended negative impacts on others. What were the consequences, and what steps did you take from avoiding similar situations moving forward?
- Tell us about a decision that you made, which you knew would be unpopular with a group of stakeholders. How did you handle the decision-making process? Were you ultimately able to garner support from this group, or did you move forward despite their opposition?
- There are times when we are all faced with implementing a policy decision, which might lie outside our personal comfort levels or might be in conflict with our values.

Please describe a time when this has happened to you, how did you handle it and what, with hindsight, would you do differently?

- Describe a time when your efforts were hampered by policies and procedures (or lack thereof). What course of action did you take and what was the outcome?
- What process do you use in order to determine whether you should make a final decision regarding an issue, or whether you should defer to your supervisor to make the decision?

## **Diversity – Leveraging/Valuing**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. Supports and promotes an environment that holds opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, culture, and age.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Enthusiastically works with all employees at all levels, capitalizing on their strengths.
- Actively seeks opinions and ideas from people of varied background and experiences to improve decisions.
- Seeks information from many different sources before deciding on own approach.
- Demonstrates respect for opinions and ideas of others.
- Creates a working environment where the diversity of backgrounds, cultures, experiences and ideas are integrated in order to optimize the contribution that individual differences can make to organizational success and culture.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- The University of Colorado Denver values the commitment to enhancing diversity university-wide and fostering a culture of inclusion. First, please tell us your definition of diversity, and second, describe how you would make a contribution to the university's effort to enhance diversity.
- Describe any contributions you have made to maintain or promote workforce diversity. What was your role, what was the outcome, and what level of the organization was affected?
- How have you demonstrated your commitment to diversity issues in your current (past) position?
- Give an example of a situation or project in which you worked with people from a wide range of backgrounds and ideas. What was your role and what was the end result?
- Tell us about a time when you included someone in your team or on a project because you felt they would bring something different to the team.
- What steps do you take to understand your colleagues' work styles? Give an example where you found it hard to adjust to one particular colleague.

## **Financial/Budget Administration**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Monitors, prepares, justifies, and/or administers the program budget and expenditures to ensure cost-effective support of programs and policies.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Strictly adheres to the organization's financial policies and processes and serves as a resource for clarifying related questions.
- Demonstrates understanding of the standards and specifications of the organization's financial systems, including source documents, system flows, system interfaces, and related internal controls.
- Generates accurate, timely reports relevant to budgetary/financial areas of responsibility and clearly articulates reported information to others in the organization.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- This position will deal with financial record keeping systems, accounting systems, and financial institutions such as banks and Financial Aid offices. Please explain your past experience in dealing with the above.
- This position has financial responsibilities such as processing purchase orders, processing travel and payment vouchers, maintaining and monitoring office operating budgets and reconciling financial statements. Please give us examples of your past experience tracking and managing finances. Please include the type of record keeping and financial systems that were used.
- What experience do you have with generating financial reports? What information did they contain? How often did you have to prepare them? What were the reports used for?
- Tell us about your experience in accounts payable. Please be as specific as possible.
- Tell us about an invoice discrepancy or dispute that you discovered and your role in resolving the issue.
- How would you deal with an irate employee who has not received his expense reimbursement? How about a student who has been fined for a lost book but insists they returned it?
- What is an accounting reconciliation? Is it the same thing as an account analysis?
- What experience have you had dealing with assisting in the management of accounts, in particular, monitoring expenditure against budget?
- Have you ever been in a position of having to reduce expenditure to operate within a constrained financial climate?
- Describe some examples of strategic planning and budgeting that you have undertaken in previous roles. What is the largest budget you have managed? How do you determine priorities if the allocation of resources is insufficient to carry out all functions in your area of management responsibility?

- This position is responsible for budget management & budget analysis for general fund accounts, auxiliary accounts and grant accounts. Please describe the complexity of your budget experience and relate your previous budget experience to working with these types of accounts.

## **Initiative**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Does more than is required or expected in the job; does things that no one has requested that will improve or enhance products and services, avoid problems, or develop entrepreneurial opportunities. Plans ahead for upcoming problems or opportunities and takes appropriate action.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Goes beyond expectations in the assignment, task, or job description without being asked.
- Demonstrates a sincere positive attitude towards getting things done.
- Digs beneath the obvious to get at the facts, even when not asked to do so.
- Creates opportunities or minimizes potential problems by anticipating and preparing for these in advance.
- Seeks out and/or accepts additional responsibilities in the context of the job.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Please provide an example of a work situation in which you anticipated problems and were able to propose effective solutions to deal with the issues.
- Tell us about a time during your employment when you identified and implemented a way to improve a process. How did you go about achieving this, and what was the result?
- Describe a recent accomplishment of which you were most proud.
- Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative and took action on an issue or problem without waiting for direction. What was the outcome?
- Tell us about a time you volunteered for additional projects or assignments. Why did you do so, and what was the benefit?
- Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the job done. Why did you feel this action was necessary?

## **Innovation**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Keeps up-to-date on current research and technology in the industry.
- Identifies novel approaches for completing work assignments more effectively or efficiently and works within the “established” system to push for “a better way.”
- Reviews, selects and disseminates information regarding key technologies, best practices, and tools to others in the group.
- Understands technical aspects of one’s job and uses appropriate technology for the situation at hand.
- Tries new approaches when problem solving, seeking ideas, or suggestions from others as appropriate.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Tell us about a project or situation where you felt that the conventional approach would not be suitable. How did you derive and manage a new approach? Which challenges did you face and how did you address them?
- Tell us about a situation where you trusted your team to drive a new approach to an old problem. How did you manage the process?
- Tell us about a time when you had to convince a senior colleague that change was necessary. What made you think that your new approach would be better suited?
- Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution/idea/project/report to a problem in your past work.
- Sometimes it is essential that we break out of the routine, standardized way of doing things in order to complete the task. Give an example of when you were able to successfully develop such a new approach.
- Tell us about a problem you solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you satisfied with it?



# **Integrity**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Ability to maintain a high degree of integrity and ethical behavior in all business activities and decisions; admits mistakes and doesn't misrepresent his/herself for personal gain.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Shows commitment/dedication and accountability in one's work, and follows through on all projects, goals, aspects of one's work.
- Completes all assigned tasks on time and with minimal supervision.
- Arrives at work on time every day.
- Uses university resources, such as equipment, paper, supplies, materials, etc., with the same care and efficiency as one's own possessions.
- Fulfills all commitments made to peers, co-workers, and supervisor.
- Confronts potentially unethical behavior, reports indiscretions appropriately.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome?
- Tell us about a time when someone asked you something that you objected to. How did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever been asked to do something illegal, immoral or against your principles? What did you do?
- What would you do if your boss asked you to do something illegal?
- Tell us about a situation where you had to remind a colleague of the meaning of "integrity".
- Tell about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react/respond?
- On occasion we are confronted with 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.
- Suppose a supervisor asked you to get information for him or her that you knew was confidential and he/she should not have access to. What would you do?
- Define professional behavior and/or conduct appropriate in the workplace.

## **Interpersonal Skills**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others. Develops and maintains effective relationships, which may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Builds effective relationships with key stakeholders to enhance collaboration and understanding.
- Asks clear questions and/or provides clear instructions or information to colleagues and customers through various methods of communication.
- Uses appropriate nonverbal communication (eye contact, gestures, posture) when communicating with others.
- Examines decisions from the perspective of the customer before acting.
- Addresses work problems with people individually.
- Communicates effectively with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.
- Works cooperatively with and seeks input from colleagues and key stakeholders.
- Shows support, gives encouragement, and willingly shares information, ideas, and suggestions to accomplish mutual goals.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Building rapport is sometimes a very challenging thing to do. Give an example of a time when you worked through difficult circumstances to ultimately build good rapport with a colleague.
- How do you go about establishing and developing high quality relationships with colleagues and customers?
- What do you do when you think someone is not listening to you?
- It is sometimes very difficult to perceive the needs, values, or opinions of others. Tell me about a time when you were able to 'step into another person's shoes' in order to discover their unique perspective.
- Tell us about a time when there were objections/differences of opinion to your ideas. What did you do to convince the parties involved of your ideas, or how did you reach a compromise?
- Describe the most difficult working relationship you've had with an individual. What specific actions did you take to improve the relationship? What was the outcome?
- Have you ever been in a situation in which you and your manager disagreed? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Please tell us about a time when you had to settle a conflict between two people on the job. What was the situation and what did you do?
- As you saw in the position description, this position serves as a point of contact for individuals at different administrative levels. Can you describe a time when you had a similar role? What steps did you take to ensure successful interactions with individuals, including those at the highest levels of an organization?

# **Management**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **General Definition:**

The ability to meet organizational objectives, use available resources efficiently, maintain high levels of employee performance and professionalism, and provide excellent service to customers.

## **Change Management**

Initiates and/or manages the change process and energizes it on an ongoing basis, taking steps to remove barriers or accelerate its pace.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Communicates a compelling vision and need for change within one's department/group/University that generates excitement, enthusiasm, and commitment to the process.
- Obtains and provides resources to implement change initiatives and works to make others feel ownership of the change.
- Clearly communicates the direction, required performance, and challenges of change to all involved parties.
- Identifies and enlists the support of key individuals and groups to move the change forward.
- Serves as a personal model of the change that one expects of others by demonstrating commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in organizational performance.

## **Possible Questions:**

- Describe a major change that you needed to implement in your department or organization (i.e. implementing the use of a new technological system). What steps did you utilize to introduce the change and to maintain support for it? What was the biggest obstacle to the implementation of this change? In retrospect, is there anything that you would have done differently to improve the process?
- How do you successfully manage change in an environment where there may be resistance from some individuals or groups, including those who report directly to you?
- It is often difficult to sell new ideas to staff who often feel threatened by the idea of change. How do you personally manage change and how do you help your staff to adjust?

## **Delegation**

### **Definition:**

Allocating decision-making authority and/or task responsibility to appropriate individuals to maximize the organization's and individuals' effectiveness.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Considers positive and negative impact, organizational values and structures, and enhancement of individuals' knowledge/skills prior to delegating.
- Clearly communicates the parameters of the delegated responsibility, including decision-making authority and any required actions, constraints, or deadlines.
- Suggests resources and provides assistance or coaching as needed; expresses confidence in the individual.
- Establishes appropriate procedures to keep informed of issues and results in areas of shared responsibility.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- What process do you use to determine whether or whether not to delegate certain responsibilities? Please provide an example of a situation where your ability to delegate resulted in an extraordinarily successful outcome, as well as an example where delegating responsibilities proved to be ineffective.
- Give an example of a project or task that you were reluctant to delegate and ultimately completed on your own. If faced with similar circumstances in the future, would you proceed in the same manner?
- How much leeway do you give your employees to make decisions? Tell us if and how you maintain a degree of control in that decision making process.
- Explain how you would delegate responsibilities in a situation where you were anticipating being away from the office for an extended period of time.
- Have you ever led task forces, committees or groups that did not report to you but from which you were responsible for obtaining results? What did you do to get what you needed from the group? What were the lessons that you took away?

## **Employee Development**

### **Definition:**

Creates an environment that ensures individuals are given every opportunity to grow and perform to their potential.

### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Draws on own experience and knowledge to coach and mentor others to help others continuously develop their competencies.
- Provides opportunities, tools and information that facilitate the personal and professional development of others.
- Sets an example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with the organization's mission, values and beliefs.

### **Possible Questions:**

- How do you get subordinates to produce at a high level? Give an example.
- How do you manage situations where individuals' work exceeds your expectations?
- How do you manage cross-functional teams? Please describe an example.

- Have you ever had a subordinate whose work was always marginal? How did you handle that situation? What happened?
- Tell us about a training program that you have developed or enhanced.
- What techniques do you use to motivate staff? Give a recent example, describing the results that your team was able to achieve.
- Describe a situation when you have included subordinates in your decision making. To what extent did you incorporate their input?
- At times managers may encounter situations where their work unit and staff are not as committed to the organization's vision. Can you give an example of when you experienced this problem? How did you manage the situation and what was the result?
- Part of this role will be the ongoing development of your employees. What experience do you have in this or how would you go about ensuring that staff are provided with the ongoing development and support required for success?

## **Managing Personnel**

### **Definition:**

Ability to directly oversee the work of others and to interact with them on a personal basis to get work done.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Proactively tries to build effective working relationships with other people by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included.
- Puts goals of the group ahead of one's own agenda, and supports and acts in accordance with final group decisions even when such decisions may not entirely reflect one's own position.
- Solicits the input of others who are affected by plans or actions and gives credit and recognition to others who have contributed.
- Seeks and expands on original ideas, enhances others' ideas, and contributes own ideas about the issues at hand.
- Works to build consensus within the group/department/University.
- Demonstrates concern for treating people fairly and equitably.
- Creates an environment that allows staff to feel motivated to work and interact.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a situation in which you managed a team that wasn't as effective or productive as it needed to be (i.e. due to friction between employees, a lack of knowledge and skills, or any other factor). What was hindering the team and what action did you take to improve the situation?
- What techniques have you used to build a strong team that is characterized by a high degree of trust, loyalty and accountability?
- What are the attributes of an effective leader/manager? How would you describe your leadership/management style? Have you ever had to modify your leadership/management style in a situation in order to achieve a desired result?

- Please describe how you set and measure goals for yourself as well as the teams that you manage.
- Please describe the most difficult decision that you've made as a manager. What was your thought process and what was the impact on your team and/or organization?
- Can you describe a situation where you have had to make a decision that involved a high degree of risk? What was the result of this decision? Looking back, would you have done anything differently?
- Describe a situation where you had difficulties garnering support and cooperation from a particular group? Describe how you handled the resistance. What was the outcome?
- Tell us about a time when you were less successful as a leader than you wanted to be. What lessons did you apply from this situation to other situations you encountered afterwards?
- If you were offered this position, what would your short-term and long-term leadership/management goals be?
- Reflecting on your career, can you describe a major professional accomplishment achieved through successfully leading/managing a team?
- Please describe your leadership/management experience. What do you enjoy most about being a manager? What do you enjoy least?
- What techniques do you use to get your employees, as well as other stakeholders, to buy into a course of action or a directive that you've set?
- Describe strategies you have or would employ to achieve outcomes for a new initiative where you do not have direct control of resources.
- Managing resources successfully in difficult times requires innovation. Please provide an example of how you may have re-engineered activities to achieve better outcomes and/or efficiencies and particularly how you may have employed (information technology/other staff) in this process.
- How do you keep your employees informed of what is going on in the organization?
- One of your customers has just said to you, "The service here is terrible." How would you respond to the customer? How would you relay the information to the employees?

You have received complaints about one of your employees regarding errors and customer service. Describe in detail the steps you would take to handle the problem.

## **Performance Management/ Coaching**

### **Definition:**

Works to improve and reinforce performance of others. Facilitates their skill development by providing clear, behaviorally specific performance feedback, and making or eliciting specific suggestions for improvement in a manner that builds confidence and maintains self-esteem.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Provides feedback that is clear, direct and timely. Describes the impact of actions and checks for understanding.
- Willingly shares personal experiences and knowledge to help raise individual and team performance.
- Regularly provides genuine and positive recognition for efforts that achieve the desired results.
- Works with team and individuals to set challenging performance goals that reflect organizational values.
- Helps others to find their own solutions by showing them the right questions to ask, rather than providing the answers.
- Recognizes emerging performance problems and intercedes quickly to help the individual take responsibility for improving the situation.

### **Possible Questions:**

- Please tell us about your experience managing employees' performance. How did you track progress towards achieving individual or departmental goals? What steps would you take if goals weren't met? On the other hand, how did you handle situations where goals were exceeded?
- What experience have you had in developing and delivering a training program?
- Describe a situation in which your performance management skills helped to improve an employee's performance.
- When you have received feedback as a manager, what strengths and areas of improvement have been recognized in your performance by supervisors and subordinates? How have you addressed those areas that need development?
- As a manager, what was the most challenging employee performance issue you've had to deal with? How did you handle it and what was the end result?
- How do you go about setting goals with subordinates? How do you involve them in the process?
- Tell us about a time when you had to take disciplinary action with someone you supervised.

## **Negotiation/Consensus Building**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Ability to convince others to own expressed point of view, gain agreement and acceptance of plans, activities or products.

### **Behavioral Indicators**

- Involves others early in the process to get their input and "buy-in" before making decisions that affect them.
- Asks questions and initiates discussion to gain a thorough understanding of the group dynamics before proceeding with projects.
- Detects potential problems and takes action (including reasonable risks where appropriate) to resolve conflicts promptly.
- Builds alliances or task forces across the organization in order to get their job accomplished.
- Develops a strategy for giving on some points and standing firm on others to achieve mutually acceptable solutions.
- Persuasively presents opinions and perspectives to others to gain acceptance.
- Influences others and develops trust by displaying integrity and credibility, i.e., by saying what they mean and meaning what they say.
- Responds to opposing views in a non-defensive manner, keeps arguments issue-oriented.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a situation where you needed to persuade different stakeholders who had different agendas with regards to a key issue. What approaches or strategies did you use? Were the techniques you used different from one stakeholder to another? Were your efforts successful? Why or why not?
- Please give an example of a time when a negotiation did not go as well as you anticipated. What could you have done differently to achieve a better outcome?
- Tell us about an occasion where you used your negotiating skills to bring about a resolution that was in best interest of all parties involved.
- When you recommend an idea or initiative to upper management, what approach and strategies do you typically use? Please provide a recent example.
- Have you ever met resistance when implementing a new idea or policy to a work group? If so, how did you deal with it and what was the end result? If not, how would you go about implementing a new idea or policy in the face of resistance?



## **Organizational Understanding**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Demonstrates an understanding of underlying organizational issues. Understands agendas and perspectives of others, recognizing and effectively balancing the interests and needs of one's own group with those of the broader organization. Is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Knowledgeable about one's own department and about the organization in general. Aligns work unit's objectives/priorities with those of the organization.
- Understands the relationships, concerns and agendas of key people, and decisions made inside and outside of their own work group.
- Knows where to seek resources, information and support from within the organization when necessary.
- Finds ways to get things done effectively through formal and informal channels.
- Maintains cross-functional focus and uses the most appropriate channels to communicate within and between departments/divisions.
- Works to build a sense of common purpose across all work groups, avoiding a "we versus them" attitude.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Describe a project where you needed to involve input from other departments. How did you identify that need and how did you ensure buy-in from the appropriate leaders and managers?
- What are some of the major sources you use within your organization to gather information for decision making or completion of work-related assignments?
- Describe a time when you failed to engage individuals/groups at the appropriate level in your organization. What led to this, and were you able to rectify the situation?
- How do you ensure compliance with policies in your area of responsibility?
- Tell us about a time when your action contradicted company policy. Why did you initiate this action and what was the outcome?
- Describe how you measure and account for the impact of your decisions on external parties. Please provide an example where you underestimated the impact of your decisions on stakeholders external to your organization.
- Please describe your ideal supervisor.

# **Planning & Organization/ Time Management**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Establishes a systematic course of action for self or others to ensure accomplishment of a specific objective. Sets priorities, goals, and timetables to achieve maximum productivity.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Develops or uses systems to organize and keep track of information (e.g., “to-do” lists, appointment calendars, follow-up file systems).
- Sets priorities with an appropriate sense of what is most important and plans with an appropriate and realistic sense of the time demand involved.
- Keeps track of activities completed and yet to do, to accomplish stated objectives.
- Keeps clear, detailed records of activities related to accomplishing stated objectives.
- Knows status of one’s own work at all times.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- This job involves a great deal of initiative and independent work. Can you please tell us about your experience with working independently and how you stay motivated and on task when you aren't being closely supervised?
- Give an example of your organizational skills. If we were to ask your supervisor or co-workers to describe these skills, what would they say?
- There may be times when this position is required to perform repetitive or simple tasks; how would you handle this?
- This position will have to deal with conflicting deadlines, multiple tasks, managing schedules, and completing unexpected projects. How do you prioritize your time and assignments when faced with this type of situation? Please provide specific examples from your previous work experience.
- How do you manage your time and set your priorities when asked to complete a number of assignments or tasks from several different individuals? Please describe a situation where you’ve been required to do this. Were you able to meet all individuals’ needs in a timely manner?
- What do you do when your timeline or project plan is disrupted by unforeseen circumstances? Give an example.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
- We have all had occasions when we just couldn't get everything done on time. When and why has this happened to you? How did you react to the situation?
- What tools and systems do you use to help with planning and organization?
- Tell us about a project or program that you were responsible for implementing. How would you rate your implementation plan’s level of success, and why? What adjustments did you have to make along the way?

## **Event Planning**

- Describe your experience and skills in the area of event planning (i.e. scheduling meetings, conferences and special events, arranging travel and hotel accommodations). What steps do you take to ensure that all arrangements have been finalized and confirmed?
- Please describe the process you would follow when scheduling a meeting between individuals within 5-10 different departments.

## **Project Management**

- What experience do you have in managing large and complex projects?
- What job or project from your past work experience required the highest level of personal independence? How did you respond to that challenge?
- Your supervisor has just given you a project, in addition to your routine office responsibilities, that has a short time frame for completion. Please describe the manner in which you would ensure accuracy in and timely completion of this project.
- Describe the most successful project you worked on. Why was it successful and what was your contribution? Describe the least successful project you worked on, why was it not successful, and what would you have done differently?
- Can you walk us through a major project you have been responsible for and tell us how you planned and scheduled its activities? What unforeseen circumstances did you come across, and how did you react?
- Tell us how and when you have utilized tools such as flow charts, production schedules, and filing systems (or anything else) to help you plan.
- Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you track your progress so that you can meet deadlines? How do you stay focused?
- Explain a significant project management challenge you have faced in the past, the steps you took to resolve them and the results of your actions.

# **Problem Solving**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Builds a logical approach to address problems or opportunities or manage the situation at hand by drawing on one's knowledge and experience base, and calling on other references and resources as necessary.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Undertakes a complex task by breaking it down into manageable parts in a systematic, detailed way.
- Thinks of several possible explanations or alternatives for a situation and anticipates potential obstacles and develops contingency plans to overcome them.
- Identifies the information needed to solve a problem effectively.
- Presents problem analysis and recommended solution to others rather than just identifying or describing the problem itself.
- Acknowledges when one doesn't know something and takes steps to find out.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Give an example of a complex problem that you successfully identified and solved. How did you approach developing a solution? Did you choose to involve others in your efforts? What was the result?
- Please describe a time when you faced a complex problem and agreed to implement someone else's solution over your own. What motivated you to do so? Was it a successful implementation; why or why not?
- Solving problems requires more than good plans; it means taking action. Give me an example of a time when you were able to take meaningful action in solving a practical problem.
- Have you ever faced a problem you could not solve? If so, please explain.
- Describe a time when you were caught off guard by a problem or obstacle that you had not anticipated. How did you react to the issue, and what was the impact of the issue and your corresponding action?
- Describe a time in which you were faced with problems or stresses which tested your coping skills. What was your reaction, and would you have done anything differently?

# **Professionalism**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Thinks carefully about the likely effects on others of one's words, actions, appearance, and mode of behavior. Selects the words or actions most likely to have the desired effect on the individual or group in question.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Practices good hygiene and presents an appropriate professional appearance.
- Understands how one is perceived by others.
- Takes actions calculated to have a positive effect on others.
- Works to make a friendly impression on others by using good eye contact and using names whenever possible.
- Works to develop and maintain positive working relationships with co-workers by being punctual, keeping personal telephone calls to a minimum, and maintaining a pleasant work attitude.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Can you recall a time when you were less than pleased with your performance? Please describe the situation. What would you have done differently?
- Give us an example of a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
- What do you consider your professional strengths? What is an area you would like to improve upon as a professional?
- Give a specific example of a time when a co-worker criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that shaped the way you work with others and your work?
- Please give me an example of a job that you really enjoyed. What kind of tasks were you given to do? How did you work with other employees to complete the task?
- What do you do when you are asked to perform a task and/or assignment that you are not familiar with?
- How do you feel about performing additional duties that are not on your job description?

# **Risk Taking**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

## **Definition:**

Initiating action that tries to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage when potential negative consequences are understood.

## **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Pursues situations or opportunities that can lead to either substantial benefit or significant negative consequence.
- Gathers information to understand probability of success, benefits of success, and consequences of failure.
- Initiates action and makes decisions despite uncertainty of outcome; is willing to accept the consequences of failure.
- Try new but unproved approaches to solving problems.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

- What is the biggest risk that you have taken as a professional? How did you handle the process and how did you go about making your decision?
- Please describe one of your current or recently completed projects, explaining the risks involved. How did you make decisions? How do you know that you made the correct decisions?
- What risks do you see in moving to this new position?
- Give an example of when you took a risk and did something differently while working within department and/or company procedures and guidelines. What was the outcome?
- How comfortable are you with risk taking in your work environment and why? Please provide examples that highlight your level of comfort with risk taking.

## **Stress Management**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks. Stays with a problem/line of thinking until a solution is reached or no longer reasonably attainable.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Displays optimism in the face of problems or obstacles.
- Appraises difficulty in a clear headed and logical way.
- Responds to problems in a practical way.
- Remains positive after setbacks.
- Maintains certainty and confidence in the face of ambiguity.
- Is able to remain focused on business objectives.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

- Tell us about a project where you achieved success despite facing a number of difficulties. What action did you take to ensure that the project successfully completed?
- Can you give an example of a professional situation where the level of pressure and stress led you to struggle with your performance? What action did you take, if any, and what was the outcome of the situation?
- How do you deal with stress? Give us examples of times when you faced a highly stressful situations and how you approached and/or reacted to them.
- Describe the environment or conditions in which you thrive, and those in which you find more difficulty functioning.
- What is the biggest work related challenge that you've faced and overcome in your career? What strategies did you use to overcome it?

## **Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skills**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### **Definition:**

Having achieved a satisfactory level of technical and professional skill or knowledge in position-related areas; keeping up with current developments and trends in areas of expertise.

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Understands technical aspects of one's job and continuously builds knowledge, keeping up-to-date on the technical or procedural aspects of the job.
- Makes oneself available to others to help solve technical or procedural problems or issues.
- Thinks of ways to apply new developments to improve organizational performance or customer service.
- Applies technical/procedural knowledge to correctly address a situation in a timely manner.
- Recognizes trends in theory and practice of one's own technical/professional area and effectively prepares for anticipated changes.

### **Possible Interview Questions:**

#### **General**

- Tell us about your work experience and skills and how they relate to this position.
- Tell us what interested you in this position and how does this position fit in with your career goals?
- Please describe the particular professional skills or experiences that make you the best candidate for this position.
- What makes you uniquely qualified for this position?
- What would you describe as your strongest skills? Which of your skills could use the most improvement?
- What do you know about the university, the 'department', this 'program', and the responsibilities of this position?
- What would be your major priorities in the first few weeks in the position?
- Describe the work environment or culture in which you are most productive and engaged.
- How would your coworkers describe your work style?
- What are the most important responsibilities in your current job? What special skills or knowledge did you need to perform these duties?

#### **Research/Faculty**

- How do your professional interests/research agenda contribute to teaching a multicultural student body?
- What teaching strategies do you use in your classes? What are the intended outcomes of these strategies?



- How do you expect to interact with department faculty who are not in your specialty?
- Describe a positive experience that you had with a mentor, and how do you intend to apply that to your mentoring roles?
- What do you know about the goals of this department, and how do you fit into those goals?
- Describe a learning opportunity you had that increased your understanding and appreciation for workplace or educational diversity.

### **Sensitive/Confidential Information**

- This position requires a high level of confidentiality. What experiences have you had in dealing with sensitive or confidential information? How do you determine what information is confidential and what isn't; what do you do if you aren't sure?
- If you were to receive an anonymous complaint about the behavior of a supervisor or co-worker what would you do?
- Please tell us about your understating of the HIPAA and/or FERPA privacy and security requirements. How does it affect the institution, clinicians, staff and patients?
- This position calls for confidentiality to be maintained at all times. Can you describe a situation when confidentiality was threatened, and how you overcame this? (If not, what measures do you take to maintain confidentiality?)

### **Technical**

- What do you think is the most important development in this field today? What impact do you think it will have?
- How do you keep informed about what's happening in your field?
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; then tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
- Describe in detail your experience with computer software programs related to your field.

### **Technological Systems**

- Describe your computing and technology experience--what computers, software, and other office equipment have you worked with?
- What is your experience using MS Office suite? Please provide examples of projects/tasks that you've completed using the following: Word, Excel, Outlook, Power Point and Access.
- Please tell us about your professional experience as it relates to computer usage and technology, including the software/systems you have used, what you've used them for, and how you would rate your proficiency in the use of each.
- What level experience have you had with web design/maintenance? Provide an example of a project you have worked on in relation to web site maintenance (what your specific role was/ task to be completed/ outcome)

- When would you use database software versus spreadsheet software, and why? How have you used databases in work projects?
- Have you created formulas in Excel? If so, please describe. Have you used Excel to create charts? If so, please explain.
- Please describe in full your experience with information maintenance or managing databases
- Have you built any databases? If so please explain the systems you used to create the database and what the database was used for?
- This position is responsible for preparing complex and professional documents and reports. Please give us examples of the different types of documents and reports that you have prepared, what was complex about the reports and what systems were used during the preparation?



## **Appendix 1: Situational Questions**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

- Describe how and in what order you would handle the following situation; you have a very long line of students who are waiting for your assistance, a co-worker has stopped by to ask you for clarification on a student's financial form, your phone is ringing, plus you're working on a project for your boss that is due in an hour. Follow up: How would you handle this type of work environment on an on-going basis?
- As an administrative assistant in the College/School of X, you will need to work closely with faculty members to assist with financial processing. One of these faculty members has a difficult time understanding accounting issues and consistently asks the same questions over and over. How would you handle this situation?
- Part of your job as an Administrative Assistant includes acting as the contact person for faculty and students needing assistance. You have received several phone calls from a faculty member asking about certain processes/forms/information. These processes/forms/information are readily available on the University's website, but the staff member never takes time to research the needed information, but instead relies on your expertise. How would you handle this situation?
- Describe how and in what order you would handle the following situation: An irate applicant comes to the office demanding to see you because he was told by an admission counselor that his application was complete but got a message from you that he needs GRE scores or his file will not be considered for the Spring term, you are with a prospective applicant that wants all the details for a particular program you support even though there is an information session being held in two weeks, in addition you have a stack of licensure applications that need to be reviewed and sent to CDE and applications for another program that need to be reviewed prior to the faculty meeting in the morning.
- How would you handle the following situation: a parent of a student calls you and is asking for information about their son's transcript. You notice that there is a hold on the student's account but the parent has informed you that their son has an interview in one hour and they need the information immediately. What would you do?
- An upset customer has just come up from the Circulation desk. This individual is being uncooperative with the student help and is starting to get vocal. Normally you supervisor would handle this situation but they are at an offsite meeting; what do you do?
- Your manager and you disagree on how a difficult situation should be handled. After much discussion, your manager clearly communicates how he/she wants you to handle the problem. Upon leaving the manager's office, your coworkers want to know where you stand on the issues. How would you respond to your co-workers' inquires?

## **Appendix 2: Illegal Interview Questions Guide**

[\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

It is best practice to conduct all interviews in the same manner and ask the same initial questions to everyone so that each candidate has the same opportunity to respond. It is fine to ask additional, follow-up questions when needed as long as they are relevant to the job, you are treating each candidate as fairly and equally as possible, and as long as you are avoiding questions that could prompt claims of discrimination or bias.

### **Acceptable areas of inquiry:**

#### Education

Questions about an applicant's educational experiences are acceptable.

You may ask: What schools have you attended? What was your degree focus?

But not: When did you graduate? (This gives an approximation of age which is illegal.)

#### Skills

Questions regarding an applicant's knowledge and skills are acceptable.

#### Prior Employment

Questions regarding information about previous employment are acceptable.

#### General Information

Questions regarding an applicant's goals, reasons for applying for the job, strengths and weaknesses etc. are acceptable to ask.

### **Unacceptable areas of inquiry:**

#### Race

Questions regarding an applicant's race are unacceptable.

You may not ask: What clubs or organizations do you belong to? (If they belong to a group which indicates their race, it could cause legal liability.)

You may ask: What professional or trade groups do you belong to related to your ability to perform this job?

#### National Origin

Questions regarding an applicant's national origin are unacceptable.

This includes questions like: Are you a U.S. citizen?

However, you may ask: Are you lawfully employable in the United States?

#### Color

Questions regarding an applicant's complexion or color of skin, hair or eyes are unacceptable.

#### Religion

Questions regarding an applicant's religion are unacceptable.

You may ask: Are you able to work evenings/weekends if necessary?

### Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation

Questions indicative of an applicant's gender, gender identity and sexual orientation are unacceptable.

### Age

Questions that can establish an applicant's age or approximate age are unacceptable. You may not ask: When did you graduate from high school/college? How old are you? You may ask: Are you over eighteen?

### Marital Status and Child Care

Questions about marital status, pregnancy, future childcare plans and childcare arrangements are unacceptable.

You may not ask: Do you have any children? What are your childcare arrangements? You may ask: Is there anything that would prevent you from coming to work regularly?

### Criminal Record

Questions about arrest records are unacceptable because they have been shown to be racially biased. Without proof of business necessity, an employer's use of conviction records (not the same as arrest records) to disqualify job applicants may be unlawful. Conviction records should be cause for rejection only if the number, nature and time of the conviction would cause the applicant to be unsuitable for the position. For example, you would be justified in not hiring someone convicted of stealing to go into people's houses and service appliances. In fact, doing so may put you at liability for negligent hiring. However, this is only because there is a reasonable, direct correlation between the conviction and the risk to your clients. The Human Resources Office should handle any concerns regarding criminal records.

### Military Service

Questions regarding dates of military service and nature of military discharge are unacceptable unless a business necessity can be shown. Please consult your Human Resources Consultant.

### Disability

Questions regarding the existence, nature, or severity of a disability are not unacceptable. Whether an inquiry is permissive or not permissive is not intuitively obvious; it has to be examined on a case-by-case basis.

You may never ask: What disabilities do you have? Or, do you have ADHD? Or, are you on any medication? (There is no acceptable way to inquire about this, or any other medical condition.)

You may ask: Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job to which you are applying? (Be sure you tell the applicant what the essential functions are).

## ILLEGAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

INQUIRY AREA	APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
Address	Current address may be requested from candidates at the time of application.	Examples: Do you own or rent your home? How long have you lived at your current address? How far do you live from campus? Do you have a foreign address? Whom do you live with?
Age	Questions about age are only	Questions about age, dates of attending

	permitted if it is necessary to ensure that a person is legally old enough to do the job.	school, dates of military service. How do you think my older employees would react if I hired you? How long have you been working?
Arrest Record	Appointing authority (only) may ask about arrests or pending charges if they are substantially related to the job. HR will address this during the background check process.	Questions about arrests or pending charges for jobs other than those that are substantially related to the particular job. Have you ever been arrested?
Convictions	Appointing authority (only) may ask about convictions if they are substantially related to the job. HR will address this during the background check process.	Questions about convictions that are not substantially related to the job.
Citizenship/ National Origin	May ask about legal authorization to work as long as all applicants are asked.	Examples: Are you a US citizen? Are you on a foreign visa? Where were you born? Where were your parents born? What kind of name is that? Is English your first language? What organizations do you belong to? (If indicative of national origin)
Credit Rating or Garnishments	Only if the job requires significant financial responsibility or access to cash or funds. In most cases, no question is acceptable.	Questions about credit ratings since they have little or no relations to job performance. Do you have many debts? Are you good with money?
Disability	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job – with or without accommodations? Questions about knowledge of skills necessary to perform the job requirements.	Example: Do you have a disability? What is the nature of severity of your disability? Are you taking any medication that we should know about? Have you ever filed for Worker’s Compensation?
Education	Inquiries about degrees or equivalent experiences that are related to the job being applied for.	Questions about education that are not related to the job being applied for. Are you planning on going back to school to get your degree? In what year did you graduate?
Family/Marital Status	Whether an applicant can meet work schedules or job requirements. If asking, should ask all applicants. For example: are you able to work occasional nights/weekends if necessary for the job?	Any inquiry about marital status: married, single, separated, divorced, and engaged; children; pregnancy or child care plans. What type of position does your spouse have? Are you living with anyone? Tell me about your family. Do you have plans to get married?
Gender	None	Any inquiry with regards to gender.
Gender Identity/Expression	None	Any inquiry with regards to gender identity/expression.
Health	None	Example: How is your (or your family’s) health? Are you taking any medications

		that we should know about? Do you smoke? How many sick days did you take last year?
Military/Veteran Status	Type of education and experience in service as it relates to a particular job.	Type of discharge or registration status.
Name	May ask current legal name. "Is additional information, such as a different name or nickname necessary in order to check job references?"	Questions about national origin, ancestry, or prior marital status. What kind of name is that?
Organizations	Inquiries about professional organizations related to the position.	Inquiries about organizations that might indicate race, sex, religion or national origin. Example: Please list all organizations, clubs or societies to which you belong.
Photographs	Requesting a photograph after hiring.	Requesting a photograph prior to hiring.
Political Affiliation/Philosophy	None	Any inquiry related to politics. Are you registered as a republican or democrat? What is your stance on this particular political issue?
Race or Appearance	None	Comments about complexion, color, height, or weight.
Religion	Describe the work schedule and ask whether applicant can work that schedule. If asking, should ask of all applicants.	Inquiries on religious preferences, affiliations, or denominations. What holidays do you celebrate?
Sexual Orientation	None	Inquiries about sexual orientation. Inquiries revealing stereotypes for certain sexual orientation (i.e. why do you wear an earring?)
Work Experience	Applicants' previous employment experience.	Questions about sick leave use or worker's compensation claims in previous jobs.