

Interview Questions to Avoid 10/2015

You cannot ask any questions during an interview that relates to an applicant's race, color, religion, age, gender, national origin, or disability. In some states, inquiries about a candidate's sexual orientation are illegal. The following questions are merely a few of the questions that should not be asked:

Questions to Avoid

- Are you a U.S. citizen?
- Where were you born?
- What is your birth date?
- How old are you?
- Do you have a disability?
- Are you married?
- What is your spouse's name?
- What is your maiden name?
- Do you have any children?
- Do you have child care arrangements?
- What is your race or ethnic origin?
- Which church do you attend?
- What is your religion?

The following questions should be asked only when there is a bona fide, job-specific reason to ask them. If asked of one candidate, they should be asked of all candidates for the same position.

Acceptable Alternative Questions

- Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job's attendance or travel requirements?
- Are you able to work in the United States on an unrestricted basis?
- Are you able to perform the duties on the job description with or without reasonable accommodations?
- Have you ever been convicted of a felony crime?
- If hired, can you provide proof that you are at least 18 years of age?
- Do you have any conflicts that would prevent you from working the schedule discussed?
- What languages do you speak or write fluently?
- Have you worked under any other professional name or nickname?
- Do you have any relatives currently working overtime, if required?
- Would anything prohibit you from making a long-term commitment to the position and the institution?

Good Interview Questions

1. Tell us a little more about your professional experiences, particularly those not mentioned on your resume.
2. Why are you interested in leaving your current assignment and why do you feel that this assignment would be better for you?
3. Do you feel this position is a promotion, a lateral move, a broadening of your professional experience, or just a change? Why do you think so?
4. How does this position fit into your overall career goals?
5. Describe the duties of your current job.
6. What do you dislike more about your current job?
7. What is your favorite part of your current job and why is it your favorite part?
8. What are three college courses that best prepared you for your current job?
9. What is the best method of creating a _____? (a relevant product)
10. What qualities or experience make you the best candidate for this position?
11. Describe two or three major trends in your profession today.
12. On the basis of the information you have received so far, what do you see as the major challenges of this position and how would you meet them?
13. Describe a situation in which you did “all the right things” and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
14. Discuss the committees on which you have served and the impact of those committees on the organization where you currently work.
15. Why did you choose this profession/field?
16. What new skills have you learned over the past year?
17. Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you thought you would not be able to complete. How did you accomplish the assignment?
18. Have you ever had a great idea but been told that you could not implement it? How did you react? What did you do?
19. Describe the best boss and the worse boss you have ever had.
20. Describe your ideal job.
21. What would your coworkers or your supervisor say about you?
22. Can you describe how you go about solving problems? Please give us some examples.
23. What is the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work? How did you handle that situation?
24. What new programs or services would you start if offered the position?
25. Please share with us your philosophy about customer service in an academic environment and give us some examples of service that would illustrate your views.
26. Tell us how you would learn your new job in the absence of a formal training program.
27. How would you characterize your level of computer literacy? What are some of the programs and applications with which you are familiar?
28. Think about a coworker from the present or past whom you admire. Why?

29. What are the characteristics that you prize most in an employee? What behaviors or characteristics do you find intolerable?
30. Can you share with us your ideas about professional development?
31. Describe some basic steps that you would take in implementing a new program.
32. What is one or two of your proudest professional accomplishments?
33. Do you have any knowledge of the unique role of a _____? (two-year college/liberal arts college/research university)
34. How do you feel about diversity in the workplace? Give us some examples of your efforts to promote diversity.
35. Tell us how you go about organizing your work. Also, describe any experience you have had with computers or other tools as they relate to organization.
36. Please tell us what you think are the most important elements of a good _____. (Service, activity, product, class, etc.)
37. Describe your volunteer experience in community-based organizations.
38. What professional associations do you belong to and how involved in them are you?
39. Tell us about your preferred work environment.
40. What experiences or skills will help you manage projects?
41. Tell us how you would use technology in your day-to-day job.
42. In what professional development activities have you been involved over the past few years?
43. What volunteer or social activities have helped you develop professional skills?
44. What things have you done on your own initiative to help you prepare for your next job?
45. Do you have any concerns that would make you have reservations about accepting this position if it is offered to you?
46. What do you think most uniquely qualifies you for this position?
47. Do you have any additional information that you would like to share?
48. Do you have any questions for us?