

OFFICE OF CAREER & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Interview Questions

Questions that you might be asked - Think about how you will answer these questions and then practice answering them aloud.

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- What is your greatest strength? (Relate to job description)
- What is your greatest weakness? (Turn into a positive i.e. perfectionist with high expectations. Admit a past problem and what you learned from it.)
- Tell me about yourself. (Reveal something semi-personal but still professional.)
- How do others describe you? (Keep it positive.)
- How would you describe yourself to others? (Keep it positive and brief.)
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you work under pressure?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- Do you have a geographical preference? Will you relocate? Are you willing to travel?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What would you do if...? (Imagine situations that test your knowledge of the job.)
- Could you give me an example of how you have demonstrated _____ skill? (Think first, be specific and speak only long enough to answer the question.)
- What have you done recently that shows your initiative and willingness to work?

QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE POSITION/THE CAREER FIELD/THE ORGANIZATION:

- What do you know about our organization?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in our organization?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the organization for which you hope to work?
- What do you think about _____?

■ Interview Questions ■

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

- Tell me about your education. (Use examples that relate to the position.)
- Why have you chosen this particular field?
- How has your CUSSW experience prepared you for a career?
- Describe your most rewarding university experience.
- Why did you select CUSSW? What led you to choose your major?
- What academic subjects did you like best/least? Why?
- If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
- What changes would you make at CUSSW? Why?
- Tell me about one of your papers or your thesis.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE:

- Why should I hire you?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this field?
- What qualifications do you have for this job? (Match what you know about the job and company to your experience)
- Why are you interested in working for this organization? (Relate your skills to what you know about the organization.)
- Why did you leave your previous job(s)? (Turn into a positive.)
- Which jobs or internships have you most enjoyed? Why?
- Walk me through your career from undergraduate school onward. Why did you make the choices that you made?
- Which skills and functions are you most comfortable with? If I were to assign you a project based on your expertise, what would I give you?
- What are your weakest skills, and how are you addressing these?
- Give me an example of how you handled a difficult situation on a previous job.
- Describe your best/worst boss. (Keep it positive, don't be critical.)
- In a job, what interests you most/least? (Relate to position.)
- What do you consider the single most important idea you contributed or your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job?
- What could you have done better on your last job? (Keep it positive.)
- If you were hired, what ideas/talents could you contribute to the position or our company?

■ Interview Questions ■

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATION:

- Where do you see yourself in three years? (Demonstrate ambition and flexibility.)
- How does this position fit into your future plans? (Demonstrate potential and ambition.)
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What do you think about the future of this field?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
- When and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What do you hope to gain out of [the position, the organization]?
- What questions do you have for the interviewer?

QUESTIONS THAT YOU SHOULD ASK

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION:

- What makes your organization unique or different from others in its industry?
- What is the single biggest challenge facing your organization now?
- What are your organization's plans for future growth?
- How would you describe your organization's culture and management style?
- What do you see as the organization's strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you feel about working in this organization?
- What are the company's short and long-term objectives?

ABOUT THE JOB ITSELF AND ITS POSITION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION:

- Please describe the overall structure of the organization.
- Where does this position fit in the overall organization?
- What is the overall structure of the department in which the position is located? What are the future plans for that department?
- How much contact is there between departments and between individuals in the organization?
- As you think about the position, what aspects of this job could be performed better?
- What are the key challenges or problems of this position?
- When will a decision be made about this position?
- What do you see as my greatest strengths and weaknesses pertaining to this position?
- What are the opportunities for personal growth?
- What are the typical first-year assignments?
What percentage of my time would be spent in different tasks/functions?

■ Interview Questions ■

- Tell me about your initial and future training and/or professional development opportunities.
- Is it organizational policy to promote from within? What percentage of supervisory positions is filled from within the organization? What is the work history of your top management?
- *If you are interviewing for an internship:* Do you typically hire your interns for permanent, full-time positions once they graduate?

ABOUT PEOPLE IN THE ORGANIZATION:

- What characteristics does a successful person have at your organization?
- May I talk to someone who currently holds or recently held this job?
- How is an employee evaluated and promoted? How often would my performance be reviewed?
- Why do you enjoy working for this organization?
- What qualities are you looking for in new hires?
- From what schools were recent graduates hired during the last two years? Do any CUSSW graduates work here?

QUESTIONS EMPLOYERS ARE NOT LEGALLY ALLOWED TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW:

- Age
- Date of Birth
- Previous Address
- How Long at Present Address
- National Origin
- Religion
- Name of Priest, Rabbi or Minister
- Father's Surname
- Mother's Surname
- Maiden Name
- Age(s) of Child(ren)
- How Many Children
- Marital Status
- Who Will Care for Children
- Spouse's Place of Employment
- Spouse's Residence
- Parents' Residence
- Parents' Place of Employment
- Whether Residence Is Owned or Rented
- Loans or Financial Problems
- Wage Attachments

■ Interview Questions ■

- Personal Bankruptcy
- If Ever Arrested
- Legal Convictions, Unless Relevant to the Job
- Foreign Languages Spoken, Unless Required by the Job
- Race
- Memberships in Social Organizations
- Attitudes Towards Geographical Relocation, Unless Required by the Job
- Height and Weight, Unless Required by the Job
- Type of Military Discharge

However, it is important to think about how you will respond if asked one of the above questions. There is no right or wrong answer; your approach should be based on your individual style. One possible response might be, “could you tell me how that question is related to the job?”

Remember that there are numerous questions, some of which may feel intrusive, that the employer may legally ask. Some of these questions follow.

PROPER QUESTIONS:

- Reasons for termination of previous employment
- About references
- Work schedule
- Previous work experiences
- Job-related feelings about previous assignments or present position
- Career interests
- Job duties
- Education and training
- Job-related professional associations
- Qualifications for duties related to the job
- Citizenship

In the course of being honest with your answers, try to be positive. Even if a question is posed in a negative way, practice turning it around so that your response takes on a positive light.