

Interviewing Guide

Topics, Questions and Procedures

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Human Resources

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Interviewing Best Practices

All interviewed candidates should be asked the same questions. Prior to the interviews, create a list of core questions that will aid in assessing the candidate's qualifications. If you have specific questions about the candidate's resume or a follow up question to an answer, it's okay for this to differ. Think about the formal requirements of the job (education, years of experience, skills) and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required (communication, people skills, conflict resolution) and create your questions based on those.

Competency Based (Knowledge, Skill or Behavior) Questions

Ethics/Integrity

- 1) Describe a situation where you had to say "no" to a customer, coworker or supervisor, because you didn't think saying "yes" would be right.
 - a. Describe how you handled the situation.
 - b. How/Why did you think you were "right"?
- 2) Describe what you would do if a co-worker asked you to lie for them.
 - a. How would you handle the request?
 - b. What would you say and do?
- 3) Describe what you would do if a friend asked you to reveal confidential information.
 - a. What would you do?
 - b. How would you respond to the request?

Customer Service

- 1) Describe a time when you were provided excellent customer service by going beyond your primary job responsibilities.
 - a. Describe your involvement.
 - b. What was the outcome?
- 2) Describe an encounter with an irate customer or coworker?
 - a. Describe your involvement.
 - b. What was the outcome?
 - c. If the encounter were to reoccur, would you handle it differently, how and why?

Communication

- 1) Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation which you completed.
 - a. What was significant about the document?
 - b. How were others involved in assisting you with this project?
- 2) Give an example of when you were able to communicate to with another person, even when that individual may not have liked you.
 - a. Describe how you handled the situation.
 - b. What as the outcome?

- c. Provide another example related to
 - i. Someone from a different culture
 - ii. Someone who could not hear you
 - iii. Someone with a different knowledge level.

Problem Solving

- 1) Give an example of a time in which you had to solve a problem.
 - a. What strategies did you use?
 - b. What decision did you make?
 - c. What was the outcome?
 - d. What would you do differently?
- 2) Describe a time when you came to work expecting to do a specific thing and were asked to do something else.
 - a. How did you handle this change?
 - b. How would you handle this situation if it were to reoccur?
- 3) Describe a time when you were asked to work overtime at the last minute.
 - a. How did you respond to this request?
 - b. How would you handle this situation if it were to reoccur?

Technology

- 1) If you were asked to operate a new piece of equipment, what would you want to know first?
 - a. What questions would you ask?
 - b. Who would you want to talk with?

Safety

- 1) Have you ever been in a work situation where someone was violent or potential violent?
 - a. If yes, what did you do?
 - b. Would you handle it differently if it were to reoccur?
- 2) What would you do if you found a sharp (needle or syringe) or a body fluid spill?

Self-Management

- 1) It is your first day on your new job and your supervisor is pulled away from 3-4 hours on an emergency. You have been left alone to acquaint yourself with your new job and department.
 - a. What actions do you take?
- 2) Describe a time when you had to do several things at once.
 - a. How did you respond?
 - b. How did you organize the situation?
 - c. How did you decide which task had the highest priority?
 - d. How do you handle having "too much to do"?

Opportunities and Actions

- 1) Describe times when you have received positive and negative feedback.
 - a. How did you respond?
 - b. How did you use the feedback that you received?
- 2) What is your most recent accomplishment that you thought was innovative?
 - a. How was this rewarding?
 - b. How was this accomplishment beneficial to your workplace?
- 3) Describe a time when you suggested a different way to do a task.
 - a. Please describe the situation
 - b. What was the unusual way of doing this?
 - c. What did you question or what alternative did you suggest?
 - d. How was your question or suggestion received?
 - e. Would you do it again?

Chance Resilience

- 1) Describe a change in your work environment.
 - a. Please describe the situation.
 - b. Please describe your involvement. How did the change affect you?
 - c. How did you respond to the change?
 - d. What was the outcome?
 - e. If that were to reoccur, would you handle it differently?
 - f. If yes, what would you do differently?

Teamwork

- 1) Describe an effective or ineffective teamwork experience.
 - a. What made it effective or ineffective?
 - b. How did you contribute?
 - c. If that were to recur, would you handle it differently?
 - d. If yes, what would you do differently?
- 2) Describe a time when you have been part of a team in which difference of opinions developed about how the work was assigned or completed.
 - a. What was your role?
 - b. What actions did you take?
 - c. What was the outcome?

Cost Effectiveness

- 1) Give an example where you saved money or made work easier or safer.
 - a. Was that something that happened once, or was that an ongoing opportunity for savings?
 - b. Were you the only person who was reducing costs or waste that way?
 - c. Did you share the idea?

Questions You Can – and Cannot – Ask

**Job Interviewer’s Guide
(what you can – and cannot – ask)**

Area of inquiry	Acceptable areas of inquiry	Unacceptable areas of inquiry	Reason why
Name	For access purposes, inquiry into whether the applicant’s work records are under another name	- To ask if a woman is a Miss, Mrs. or Ms. - To request applicant to give maiden name or any previous name he or she has used	- Title VII - Title IX - NEOC
Age	Require proof of age by birth certificate after hiring	- To ask age or age group of applicant - To request birth certificate or baptismal record before hiring	- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
Birthplace/National Origin/Citizenship	- To ask whether ALL applicants are legally authorized to work in U.S.	- To inquire into national origin or birthplace of applicant or applicant’s family. - Ask for birth certificate or other proof of U.S. citizenship before hiring - Whether U.S. citizen - If U.S. residence is legal - If spouse is a citizen	- Title VII - NEOC
Race/Color	- To indicate that the institution is an equal opportunity employer - To ask race for affirmative action plan statistics, after hiring	Any inquiry that would indicate race or color	- Title VI - Title VII - NEOC
Sex	Indicate that the institution is an equal opportunity employer	To ask applicant any inquiry that would indicate sex, unless job related.	- Title VII - Title IX - NEOC
Sexual Orientation	To indicate that the institution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation	To ask an applicant any question that would indicate the applicant’s sexual or affectional orientation	Institution policy
Religion	To state normal hours and days of work required by the job to avoid possible conflict with religious convictions.	- To ask an applicant’s religion or religious customs or holidays - To request recommendations from church officials.	- Title VII - NEOC
Marital/ Parental Status	- Whether applicant can meet work schedules. - Inquiries, made to males and females alike, as to duration of stay on job.	- To ask marital status before hiring - To ask about the number and age of children, child care arrangements and plans to have more children before hiring for insurance purposes.	- Title IX - NEOC
Disability	- If candidate is able to carry out the essential functions of the job - After hiring person may inquire whether person may require “reasonable accommodation”	To ask job applicants general questions about whether they have a disability or about the nature and severity of their disability.	- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, ADA - Title VI - NEOC
Military Service	Inquiry into services in the U.S. armed forces, including rank attained, branch of service, or any job-related experience	- To ask type of discharge - To request service records before hiring - To ask about services in the military of any other country besides the U.S.	- Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans - Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (PL-93-508)
Conviction, arrest and court record	To inquire about convictions if the reason for the inquiry is a business necessity.	Any inquiry relating to arrests, court or conviction records not substantially related to job in question	- Title VII - NEOC
Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)	To ask, request, or purchase genetic information about employee or employee’s family	Prohibits using an employees’ genetic information in employment decisions	Title VII

NEOC = Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission (NEOC)
Title VI = Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
ADEA = Age Discrimination in Employment of 1967

Title VII = Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
Title IX = Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

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Sample Notes for Offer Request

When interviews are finished, and before an offer is made, a request must be made of Human Resources for approval to make the offer. A summary of the interviews must be compiled by the search chair and sent to the Employment Office in Human Resources, along with reference checking notes, for review and approval. An example of an interview summary is below.

SAMPLE NOTES – CANDIDATES INTERVIEWED

Interviews for _____ (position), Posting Number #2020- _____, Position Number: _____.

Sarah Smith – Sarah communicated more than sufficient knowledge of the dynamics of student records & registration in a college setting. She presented herself strong in the area of transfer credit knowledge based on her 5 yrs of employment at UNL. Sarah was able to answer her questions in a way that clearly supported her knowledge and interest in the position. We wish to offer her the position.

Joe Garcia – Joe has 5 years of experience in the field at ICC. He communicated sufficient knowledge of the dynamics of student records & registration in a college setting. He showed a lot of enthusiasm about returning to this line of work after a break in service. He answered questions well. We would be comfortable offering him the position if Sarah declines.

Joe Johnson – Joe presented very little actual experience working with student records and registration as we proceeded with the interview. It became clear to us that Joe would be best suited for a position supporting the Enrollment Records Associate. We would not be interested in extending an offer to Joe for this position.