

Sample DBES Interview Questions

Source: Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative and CU Science Education Initiative; see Wieman (2017)

PDF and editable Word version: <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/seihandbook/chapter/supplemental-documents/>

In the SEI, departments handled the DBES interviews. Typically, the DBES was asked to give a talk on their research or an education-related topic of their choice. They were given information about the SEI and SEI Central. They were asked about their experience working with faculty, how they might handle some common scenarios, their career goals, and their interest or experience with educational research. Special attention was paid to any red flags, such as a personal agenda that doesn't match the SEI goals or overconfidence in their knowledge about science education.

In the samples below, the term for DBES is specific to the initiative that was doing the interviewing; in the UBC CWSEI this was Science Teaching and Learning Fellow (STLF) and in the CU SEI it was Science Teaching Fellow (STF).

Sample 1: STLF Interview Questions (UBC CWSEI)

From your previous teaching experience, what is involved in teaching well? In working well with other instructors? What do you see as your biggest challenge in becoming a STLF? What do you need to learn or be trained on?

Scenarios

1. You are working with a faculty member, Dr. X, to improve an upper-level laboratory course. One of the first things you decide to do is to create learning objectives for the course. How would you manage an email from the faculty member that states their frustration because they “do not see the value in creating learning objectives in the lab?”
2. You are working with a faculty member, Dr. X, to develop interactive in class activities for a lecture course. A student from the class emails Dr. X complaining that the interactive activities are a waste of time and the student is paying to hear from the expert in the class, not to talk to his peers. Dr. X is concerned by the email and questions the entire project and the use of in-class activities. How would you respond to the faculty member? How would you advise Dr. X to respond to the student?
3. You are assigned to work on developing materials for a laboratory course. The faculty member teaching the course is not incredibly interested in making changes. How would you connect with the faculty member?
4. You are working with a faculty member who is very excited to work with you on developing interactive activities in class. The faculty member gives you course content and material to build activities around at the very last minute. You are scrambling to complete the activity before class. This repeats. How would you handle this?

Sample 2: STLF Interview Questions (UBC CWSEI)

Interview questions for STLF candidates, Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences (EOAS), July 2014

Morning Meeting

1. What interests you most about this position?
2. What do you think is your most relevant background for the position?
3. Questions from the committee regarding what the candidate wrote [for the pre-interview writing prompt], particularly in assessing the effectiveness of [this topic/method/program] on the instructors and the transfer of professional skills and pedagogies.
4. How do you envision your role in supporting faculty in the co-teaching model?
5. How would you help a faculty member who asks for advice on improving engagement in his/her course? How would you tell if your advice worked?
6. Describe a teaching/learning situation in which you found a person challenging to work with. Explain how you handled that situation, and what the long-term outcome was.
7. Describe an assessment tool you have developed (or used). How confident were you that the assessment was measuring what you intended, and on what did you base your confidence?
8. In this job, you will have opportunities to lead and contribute to efforts in research and publication. Are there particular areas of teaching and learning research that are most interesting to you? Do you see ways in which they overlap with the job as you perceive it?
9. How would you like to develop professionally in this position? What skills would you like to develop as an STLF? What do you see as the biggest challenge for you?
10. You'll meet with us again at the end of the day, but do you have any questions for us now?

Afternoon Meeting

1. From your meetings with EOAS faculty members, were there things you learned today about the job, or about the expectations of different faculty members, that were new to you? Can we help clarify anything?
2. From your meetings with STLFs from this and/or other departments, do you have questions about what would be expected of you in EOAS? Are there issues the STLFs brought up that we could help clarify?
3. Recognizing that, currently, this is a finite (three-year) project, what do you envision doing afterward?
4. Any other questions about what you have seen, heard, or discussed today?

Sample 3: Physics STF Interview (CU SEI)

Areas to probe:

- Faculty interactions—how much experience working with faculty does the candidate have?
- Assessing student thinking:
 - Student interviews—what were the goals of your interviews and how have you structured these interviews? What works well? What hasn't worked?
 - What are some student difficulties you've seen in teaching Electricity and Magnetism?
 - How do you know if your students understand?
- Why are you interested in this position? How does this fit into your career plans?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- Familiarity with literature: what have been some of the Physics Education Research findings that influence your approach to teaching most?
- Content knowledge: when was the last time that you thought about upper-division Electricity & Magnetism content?
- What aspects of your current research are applicable to upper division courses?

Sample 4: Chemistry STLF Interview (UBC CWSEI)

Any questions about what you have seen, heard, or discussed today?

Why did you apply for this position?

Core projects

- What projects are you most interested in?
- What are some ways you could involve more faculty in the type of work that the CWSEI does? (Beyond those involved in the core projects.)

Describe a time when you felt you were not being supervised effectively. That is, something your supervisor was doing that was not allowing you to reach your full potential.

Tell me about a time when you felt you needed to speak out and go against what a colleague was saying or doing.

Describe a situation when you successfully 'read' someone and were able to guide your actions as a result of figuring out what they needed.

Give an example of a difficult person that you had to deal with. Explain how you handled the situation.

Why do you think many faculty are resistant to active learning strategies?

Describe an assessment tool you have developed. What was it designed to measure, how did you develop the assessment, and how did you know it was working?

What skills would you like to develop as an STLF?

Do you have any questions for me?

What are your salary expectations?

Sample 5: Faculty Rating 1 (UBC CWSEI)

Candidate Evaluation Sheet—Science Teaching and Learning Fellow

The following offers a method for department faculty and others to provide evaluations of job candidates.

Candidate's Name: _____ Your Name: _____

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- Read applicant's CV
- Read applicant's teaching statement
- Read applicant's letters of recommendation
- Attended candidate's job talk
- Met with candidate
- Attended lunch or dinner with candidate
- Other (please explain):

The successful candidate will (1) support faculty members in incorporating evidence-based teaching practices into their courses, (2) assess student learning and faculty professional development, (3) contribute to research in teaching and learning, and (4) teach one course per year in EOAS. Please comment on your impression of the candidate's abilities in these areas (you do not need to address all four).

Please rate the candidate on each of the following criteria.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Unable to judge	Fair	Poor
Potential for (evidence of) impact/innovation in teaching and learning						
Potential for (evidence of) educational leadership						
Potential for (evidence of) effective collaboration						
Potential for (evidence of) contributions to research in teaching and learning						
Fit with STLF position						
Ability to make positive contributions to department's climate						
Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduates						
Potential demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious university community member						

Other comments:

Sample 6: Faculty Rating 2 (UBC CWSEI)

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Department of Chemistry Science Teaching and Learning Fellow Search

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to this search. On behalf of the Search Committee, your contribution to the process is much appreciated.

It is important that your comments include your name. Anonymous comments will not be considered. Your name will be removed before comments are shared with the Search Committee.

Please send your comments to [department contact person's information] by [date and time].

This form is meant to be a guide; feel free to elaborate your comments. If you require more space, please use a separate piece of paper/email and attach it to this form.

Your name: _____

Please indicate your status:

Faculty Staff STLF Student Other (please list affiliation) _____

Candidate's name: _____

Please indicate the activity that you participated and the event(s) that you attended:

I read the following documents from the candidate's application (check all that apply)

- Cover letter and CV
- Teaching statement
- Letters of reference

I attended the candidate's seminar

- Yes
- No

I met with the candidate (underline one-on-one or group interview)

- Yes
- No

I joined the candidate for lunch or dinner

- Yes
- No

Other: _____

Candidate's name: _____

Please comment on the candidate's knowledge and skill in the areas of teaching and learning. You may want to consider the candidate's experience in developing teaching/learning resources and assessments, knowledge of education research methods (for example, interviewing, focus groups, and surveys), teaching philosophy, and interest in students.

Please comment on the candidate's potential to interact effectively with faculty and students. You may want to consider the candidate's enthusiasm about teaching and learning, personality, work ethic, and leadership ability.

Please provide any other written comments you think would help the committee with its decision.