

Interview questions bank

GUIDE FOR HIRING MANAGERS

When developing interview questions, refer to the selection criteria, the Position Description and requirements of the role. Interview questions should be designed in such a way that they elicit information about candidate's ability to meet the requirements of the role.

Consider different types of questions at different stages of the interview. You may want to start with more informal open-ended questions to build the rapport and progress to more structured **behavioural** questions. Behavioural questions ask a candidate how they acted in the past in a specific work situation and are a good predictor of the candidate's future performance.

Use [Interview Guide](#) to record your questions and help you structure your interview.

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Types of interview questions

OPEN QUESTIONS

Where appropriate, use open-ended questions which allow candidates to express themselves and not just answer 'yes' or 'no'. For example:

“Tell me about your previous job” is more likely to reveal more information than “did you work for company X?”

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

Ask the candidate how they acted in the past in a specific situation. For example:

“Describe a situation when... What did you do? What was the outcome?”
“Can you tell me about a time when... How did you resolve the issue?”

Encourage the candidate to give specific examples from their past work experience, the action they took and the result they achieved.

Behavioural questions are a good way to predict future performance based on past behaviours. It is recommended that the interview relies primarily on the behavioural questions.

SITUATIONAL OR HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

Ask the candidate about how they would act in a certain hypothetical work situation, e.g. how they might solve a problem or handle a difficult situation. For example:

“If you disagreed with your manager about a decision, how would you handle it?”

This type of questions is particularly useful for candidates who do not have much work experience. However, these types of questions are less reliable predictors of future performance as behavioural interviews.

QUESTIONS ABOUT MOTIVATION AND FIT

The answers to these questions should help to demonstrate the right level of interest in the role and the University, as well as the motivation and fit to perform well in the role.

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

- Leading questions - questions which imply what the answer should be. For example, ‘You didn’t like the client liaison aspect of the job?’ could be more impartially phrased ‘How did you feel about the client liaison aspect of the job?’
- Discriminatory or inappropriate questions
- Closed questions (questions that elicit yes/no answers)

Examples of questions

Use the following questions as a guide. You can expand or modify these questions to suit your specific role requirements.

MOTIVATION

Questions relating to the candidate's interest in the role and match to the organisational culture:

- What attracts you to this role?
- Why do you want to leave your current role? / Why did you leave your last role?
- What are you looking for in a role?
- What style of management works best for you?
- What would you say has been your biggest achievement at work to date?
- Where do you see your career going?

PLANNING AND EXECUTION

Questions relating to managing time and resources to complete tasks and achieve objectives:

- Give me a recent example of a time when you needed to juggle two very important tasks at the one time. What were the tasks and why were they both so important? What did you do? What was the result? What did you learn from the experience?
- Tell me about a time when you successfully completed a project on time, within budget and to standards. What was the project? How did you approach it? What feedback did you receive?
- Despite our best efforts, we all have times where, for one reason or another, we're unable to meet a deadline or complete a task.
- Tell me about a time where you were not able to complete a task or project by the due date. What was the task or project? At what point did you realise you weren't going to make the deadline? What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time recently where you completed a project despite distractions. What steps did you take to ensure you remained on track and focused? What was the result?
- When working on projects, we often encounter obstacles. Tell me about a recent project you worked on where you encountered a major obstacle. What did you do to get around that obstacle? What was the outcome?

ANALYSIS AND JUDGEMENT

Questions relating to the candidate's capacity to solve problems and make decisions:

- Tell me about a difficult decision that you've recently had to make at work. What was the situation and in what way was the decision difficult? What alternatives did you consider and how did you weigh them up? What was the outcome of your decision?
- Walk me through a complex problem that you've recently solved. In what way was the problem so complex? What did you do? What alternatives did you consider? What was the outcome?

QUALITY FOCUS

Questions relating to the candidate's attention to detail and concern for meeting standards:

- Describe a time when you identified an error or problem that had escaped others' attention. What was the mistake and how did you pick it up? What was the outcome?
- We've all had times when we've been too busy to check all the details of a task or project. Tell me about a time when this happened to you and some errors were made. What was the situation? At what point did you realise there was a mistake? What steps did you take to correct it? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you found errors or poor quality in the work of others. How did you discover the errors? What did you do? How did it turn out?

CHANGE FOCUS

Questions relating to the candidate's capacity for dealing with change and adapting to new situations:

- Unexpected changes can disrupt progress of a work task/project. Tell me about a time when this happened to you and explain what you did. What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you were working on an important task/project and the parameters (scope, timeframe, specifications) changed significantly and suddenly. What did you do? What were the results?

- In times of turbulent change, it is important to remain positive about changes being introduced. Give an example of how you have been able to promote positive thinking about the upside of change rather than dwelling on the negatives. What was the situation and how did you remain focused on the positive? What was the outcome?

IMPROVEMENT FOCUS

Questions relating to the candidate's capacity for finding new and better ways of completing tasks or solving problems:

- We often have to make changes when the way we've been doing things is no longer effective. Tell me about a time when you had to change your approach to completing a specific task. What did you do? How did you figure out a better approach? What were the results?
- Give me an example of when you have taken steps to make your job easier or more efficient. What did you do? What types of things did you implement? What was the outcome?
- What would be the most recent change or improvement you initiated at work? What was it? Why and how did you do it? What was the outcome or impact?
- Give me an example of where you have done something differently to improve your organisation's processes or way of doing things. What process needed to change and why? How did you approach it and how did you know your improvements would work? What was the outcome?

SERVICE FOCUS

Questions relating relate to the candidate's approaching to dealing with customers:

- Describe a time when you went 'the extra mile' for a customer. What was the situation? Why and in what way did you go beyond what was required? What was the outcome?
- Even good customers can make unreasonable demands at times. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. How did you respond? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Customers do sometimes complain. Can you describe a time when you effectively dealt with a customer complaint? What did you do specifically? What was the outcome?

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Questions relating to the candidate's approaching to building and maintaining effective working relationships with others:

- Getting people from outside your work area to cooperate often requires them to commit time for your benefit. Tell me about a time when you asked someone outside of your work area to do this. What was the situation? What did you say to gain their cooperation? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a contentious issue with a colleague. What was the issue and why was it contentious? How did you go about ensuring the relationship did not suffer? What was the outcome?
- Can you think of a time when you were required to partner with someone from another area on an important project whose goals and objectives were quite different from your own? How did you go about managing the relationship? What was the outcome?
- We often have to work in collaboration with other people, either internal or external to our organisation, on projects or assignments. Can you tell me about a time when you have had to do this? What was the situation? Was it an effective working relationship? What made it effective/ineffective?

TEAMWORK

Questions relating to the candidate's approaching to working collaboratively with others to achieve goals:

- Give me an example of a time when you worked as part of a team to achieve a challenging goal or objective. What was the situation and what made the goal so challenging? How did you approach it and what was the outcome?
- Effective working relationships are often built on cooperation and collaboration. Tell me about a time when you have worked collaboratively with someone in order to bring about a successful outcome within the workplace. What kinds of things did you do?
- Sometimes we have to work with people who have different ideas to us about how best to approach a given task or assignment. Have you ever been in this situation? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you were working jointly on a project with a number of other stakeholders. When differences of opinion arose, how did you go about resolving them? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you've gone out of your way to help a colleague or team mate. What was the situation and why did the other person need help? How did you approach it and what was the outcome?

PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE

Questions relating to the candidate's capacity to influence and persuade other people:

- There are always times when someone doesn't agree with one of our decisions. Tell me about a decision like this and how you convinced others to accept it.
- Tell me about a difficult meeting in which you had to gain someone's agreement with or commitment to an idea or plan. Why was the meeting so difficult? How did you approach it? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you needed to persuade a person on your team to change his or her mind about an important issue. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Often we need to sell the benefits of a particular project or plan before it has any chance of getting off the ground. Describe a time when you had to demonstrate the benefits of a plan or idea to gain someone's commitment. How did you approach this and how effective were you?

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Questions relating to the candidate's approach to and track record in learning and teaching:

- Describe a time when you have designed a new course. What was the subject? How did you approach this and what underlying principles did you apply? What feedback did you receive from students or peers on the course content?
- What is your philosophy of teaching?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you have applied your teaching philosophy to a course you designed. What was the course? What is your teaching philosophy and how did you apply it? What was the feedback from students or peers on the course content?
- Describe for me a time when you had to deal with a difficult student. What was the situation? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a course you delivered where you received very positive feedback from students. What was the course? How did you approach it? What feedback did you receive and what do you think "made the difference" in terms of the impact of your teaching style and approach?
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to actively manage a HDR student to ensure he or she submitted on time. What was the situation? What additional support or coaching did you provide? What was the outcome?

- Can you provide an example of a time when you dealt with an international student needing additional support or assistance? What was the situation? What type of support did you provide? What was the outcome?
- What steps do you take to actively engage your students?
- Describe for me a course you have designed or delivered that was particularly student-centred. What was the course? In what ways was it student centred? What feedback did you receive from students? What did you learn from the experience?

RESEARCH

Questions relating to the candidate's approach to and track record in research:

- What is your current research program?
- Provide an example of a time when you successfully applied for a large research grant. What was the situation? How did you approach your application and what steps did you take to ensure your success? What was the outcome?
- Give an example of a time when you have collaborated with a peer on a research project. What was the research project? Who initiated the collaboration and how did you share the workload? What was the outcome?
- What are your future research plans?
- What are your future publication plans?
- Describe a situation in which you actively included your first or second year students in your research. What was the research? How did you involve the students? What research activities did they conduct? What was the outcome?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Questions relating to the candidate's approach to and track record in community engagement:

- Tell me about a time when you made a significant contribution to your department through your community engagement activities. What was the activity? In what way did you contribute and how did you ensure that your department benefited from your involvement? What was the outcome?
- What community engagement activities are you currently involved in?
- Describe a time when you made an active contribution to a working party within your department. What was the working party? How did you become involved? What role did you play? What was the impact of this?
- Give me an example of a time when not everyone on a working party or committee was 'pulling their weight'. What was the working party or committee? What was your involvement? In what ways were others not doing their 'fair share'? What steps did you take to address this? What was the outcome?