



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

Tell me a little about yourself.

Talk about your accomplishments, experiences and qualifications, not your childhood, family or personal information.

Why do you want to work as a ...?

Talk about the interesting details of the job and why they fascinate you.

What qualifications do you have?

Using your fingers, name a skill, list your qualifications. Move to the next skill.

Tell me about my company and why you want to work for us.

Research before the interview. Be sure to find out company's mission, vision and values as well as competitors, products and services and current events and issues.

How did you learn about us?

Friend, relative, career center, newspaper – anything to show that they are not a random choice.

How many other companies have you approached?

"Several for back-up, but this is where I really want to work, this is where my hopes are."

How many employers have you worked for during the last five years?

Tell the truth.

You seem to switch jobs a lot. Why?

Job stagnation, demotions due to down-sizing, career exploration, school schedules or having made a bad choice are all good reasons.

Tell me about your current (or last) job?

List your duties and responsibilities. Explain your accomplishments.

What did you like most about that job?

Talk about responsibilities, challenges, accomplishments and the people.

What would you change about that job?

Don't bad mouth the job. Explain that you'd want more responsibilities. It shows initiative.

Did you ever have a disagreement with a boss? Why? Why not?

Answer, "yes" and you're a troublemaker, "no" and you're a wimp. Find the middle ground: "Sure we disagreed. But we worked well together. For example..."

Which courses in school did you find most difficult? Why?

The manager wants to know if you have perseverance: "I got a D in my first term in algebra. My study skills were all wrong. I joined a study group. By the third term I pulled it up to a B and kept it there."

What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?

This is important to most managers. They want to see your leadership skills, teamwork, and social skills.

Do you plan to continue your education?

Continuing education courses suggest growth, ambition, promotability – and may qualify for tuition assistance.

What do you plan to be doing for work five years from today?

Figure the promotions you should get if you work hard for this company over the next five years. Tell the manager you plan to be working for him or her in that position. Do not indicate that you hope to start your own business, change careers or go back to school.

Give an example of any major problem that you faced and how you solved it.

Think of something related to school, work, civic or leisure activity. Tell it as a story. The manager wants to see how you define problems, identify options, decide on a solution, handle obstacles, and solve the problem.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

What was your greatest failure?

Fessing up to a failure shows maturity. Avoid examples that might reflect on your ability to do the job.

What is your greatest weakness?

Focus on work, not character weaknesses. Turn it into a positive, "I'm accused of being a workaholic. I like to stay and get caught up on the odds and ends before I go home."

What motivates you to do a good job?

Money is not a good answer. A good answer is something like, "having responsibilities and being acknowledged when the job is done right."

Are you at your best when working alone or in a group?

"Both. I enjoy working as part of a team and I can work independently to get my share of the work done."

What would you do if one supervisor told you to do something now and another supervisor told you to do it later? The manager wants to see how you would handle conflict. How would you handle it?

What kind of salary are you expecting today?

Research salary before interviewing. Try to get the employer to give you a salary first by saying, "What salary is usually offered to someone with my qualifications?"

What kind of animal would you like to be?

The purpose of these "dumb" questions is to get past your rehearsed answers and find out if you are capable of original thought. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer; it is used primarily as a test of your ability to think on your feet.

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

To give an effective answer to a behavioral question, follow the STAR formula:

- **Situation:** Use one or two sentences to set up the background of the event.
- **Task:** Describe the specific challenge, problem or event and your part in it.
- **Action:** What did you say or do in response to the situation.
- **Results:** How did it turn out? Point out your successes. If the outcome wasn't as positive as you would have liked, point out what you learned from the situation and what you would do differently.

Sample Behavioral Questions:

- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
- Describe a time when you got co-workers or classmates who dislike each other to work together. How did you accomplish this? What was the outcome?
- We have all had times when things did not go as planned. Describe a situation where you found your results were not up to the expectations of yourself, classmates, or teachers. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. What was the situation? What did you do?
- Give me an example of any major problem you faced and how you solved it.
- Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your company or class was facing. What was the challenge? What roles did others play?
- Describe any significant project or idea you have conceived within the last couple years. What did you do and results?
- Sometimes it's easy to "get in over our heads", work, school, activities – can you describe some situations where you had to ask for help?
- Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker or classmate criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others?



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYERS

- Please describe the duties of the job for me.
- What kind of assignment might I expect the first six months on the job?
- Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performances?
- Does your company encourage further education?
- How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?
- What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
- Do you have plans for expansion?
- What are your growth projections for the next year?
- Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
- How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
- Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
- What are the department's goals for the year?
- Are annual sales for the company ahead of last year's sales?
- In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
- Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
- What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
- May I talk with the last person who held this position?
- What is the usual promotional time frame?
- What do you like best about your job/company?
- Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
- Has there been much turnover in this job area?
- Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
- What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills the position?
- What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
- What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
- Is there a lot of team/project work?
- Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
- Have you previously hired UL Lafayette graduates? Are they still with the company?
- What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

25 MOST FREQUENT MISTAKES MADE DURING A JOB INTERVIEW



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
L A F A Y E T T E

**Career
Services**

Agnes Edwards Hall, Room 104 | 337.482.1444
career.louisiana.edu

Give yourself the edge by learning from other's mistakes. Here are some top factors that may create a negative impression.

1. Poor personal appearance
2. Lack of eye contact
3. A sloppy application
4. Lack of courtesy/interrupting
5. Lack of career direction/unrealistic goals
6. Use of slang language
7. Vague responses to specific questions
8. Being overbearing/canned responses
9. Lack of enthusiasm/inability to show interest and why qualified
10. Lack of self-confidence
11. Showing nervous habits/adverse body language/poor posture
12. Dishonesty/fabricated answers
13. Lack of tact/maturity
14. Lack of knowledge about company or industry
15. Unwilling to relocate
16. Intolerant prejudices
17. No initiative/unassertive/passive
18. Limp fish-like handshake
19. Unwilling to start at the bottom
20. Condemnation of past employers
21. "Shopping around" attitude
22. Early discussion about salary/benefits
23. More interested in what the company can do for them
24. No questions about the organization
25. Blatant brown-nosing