

## Example Interview Questions

The following list of example interview questions is intended to assist hiring supervisors in developing a list of position-related interview questions for each individual vacancy. Each interview question must be directly related to the position description and posting. Select 7-10 interview questions to ask candidates. Interview questions must be the same for each candidate. Document responses to questions and rank responses for each candidate on an interview template, example found within this form.

### **Customer Service**

1. Tell me about your previous work experience in customer service.
2. Tell me about a time that you helped resolve a particularly difficult customer issue.
3. What have you done recently to improve your customer service skills?

### **Confidentiality**

1. How do you maintain confidentiality when managing private data and information?
2. This position calls for confidentiality to be maintained at all times. Can you describe a situation when confidentiality was compromised, and how the situation was handled?

### **Attendance**

1. How would you describe your attendance and punctuality habits?

### **Ethics**

1. Tell me about a situation when you saw a coworker doing something dishonest. What did you do?
2. Has anyone in management ever asked you to do something you felt was unethical? If so, how did you respond?
3. Explain the phrase “work ethic” and describe yours.

### **Diversity**

1. What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment?
2. What kinds of experiences have you had working with others of different backgrounds than your own?
3. Tell me about a time you had to alter your work style to meet a diversity need or challenge?
4. How have you handled a situation when a colleague was not accepting of others' diversity?
5. What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and how would you develop and apply your commitment at this University?
6. What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster diversity competence and understanding?
7. What strategies have you used to address diversity challenges? What were the positives and negatives?

### **Initiative**

1. Describe a scenario in which you have gone above and beyond what was expected of you.
2. Describe a time in which you took initiative rather than waiting to be told what to do.

### **Communication**

1. Provide an example of how you have explained a complicated procedure to someone who was new to the situation.

2. Have you ever written instructions to be followed by employees or customers? What did you do to make sure they were easy to understand and follow?
3. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.
4. What is the most difficult writing assignment you have undertaken recently? What made it challenging? How did you handle it?
5. Recall an important report you had to prepare. How did you go about planning and organizing it?
6. Tell me about a time when you did your best to resolve a customer or client concern and the individual still was not satisfied. What did you do next?
7. Describe an opportunity in which you've had to make a presentation to a large group. Describe an opportunity in which you've had to make a presentation to a small group. What did you do differently to prepare for each?

#### **Listening Skills**

1. Have you ever had an occasion when you misunderstood someone else's instructions? What happened and why do you think it happened?
2. Tell me about an instance from your previous job when you had to rely on verbal information from someone else to get the job done.
3. Giving examples, how do you handle dissatisfied internal or external customers?

#### **Career/Goals**

1. Professionally speaking, where would you like to be in five (5) years? Ten (10) years?
2. What are your long-term goals?
3. Please give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.

#### **Computer Experience**

1. What computer systems do you / have you dealt with in current or previous roles? Are there any systems you would like further development in?

#### **Administrative/Management**

1. What are your expectations of your supervisor?
2. Describe your ideal supervisor.
3. What are your expectations of your co-workers?

#### **Attention to Detail**

1. Describe a past situation in which you felt it necessary to be very attentive to details.
2. Please describe an experience in which you were glad you paid particular attention to detail.
3. What is more important: Quantity or quality?
4. Take me through the steps that you use to ensure that your work is as accurate as possible.

#### **Decision-Making**

1. Give me an example of a difficult decision you had to make at a current or previous job. How did you solve it?
2. Can you describe a work-related occasion when you felt you made up your mind too quickly? Too slowly?
3. Tell me about a time you delayed a decision so you would have more time to think.

4. Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
5. What is more important when making a decision: Speed or accuracy?

#### **Independence**

1. On what occasions do you feel you should consult with your supervisor before proceeding with the appropriate action? When do you feel it is proper to act on your own?
2. Describe a work responsibility or project that required you to work independently. What were your responsibilities? What strategies and methods did you use to coordinate and prioritize the work?
3. What were the limits of authority in your previous job? Did you ever find it necessary to go beyond them?

#### **Planning/Time Management**

1. Describe a typical workweek. How did you plan the week's activities?
2. Tell me about an occasion when your schedule abruptly changed by unforeseen circumstances. What did you do?
3. How do you determine which activities have top priorities on your time?
4. Describe a situation when you had to manage multiple priorities with limited time. How did you handle it? How did you decide what came first?

#### **Stress Tolerance**

1. What kinds of pressures do you experience in your job? How do you cope with them? What frustrates you the most?
2. What factors primarily contribute to job stress and how do you deal with them?
3. Describe a work situation in which you were under particularly intense pressure. How did you deal with it?

#### **General Behavioral/Interpersonal Questions**

1. Provide an example of a time someone told you that you made an error. How did you react/respond?
2. Provide an example of a time someone asked you for assistance with a matter that was outside the parameters of your job description. What did you do?
3. Provide an example of a time when you were on a committee and disagreed with a point or decision made by the committee. How did you respond?
4. Tell me about a time you were upset about an unfair decision at work. How did you react?
5. Tell me about a time when you were a part of a great team. What was your part in making the team effective?
6. Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker. How did you handle the situation?
7. Can you tell me about a time during your previous employment when you suggested a better way to perform a process? What was the outcome?
8. Please provide an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, you were interrupted, and did not meet the deadline. How did you respond?
9. Tell me about a situation you wish that you had handled differently based on the outcome. What was the situation? What would you change (or will you change) when faced with a similar situation?
10. Describe a time when you performed a task outside your perceived responsibilities. What was the task? Why did you perceive it to be outside your responsibilities? What was the outcome?

11. What would your last supervisor say about you?
12. Describe how you like to be managed, and the best relationship you've had with a previous supervisor.
13. If I asked your previous/current co-workers about you, what would they say?
14. How would your co-workers describe your work style/habits?
15. Describe what you see as your strengths related to this job/position. Describe what you see as your weaknesses related to this job/position.
16. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? For example, assume you are in a situation where you have to deal with a person very different from yourself and you are finding it difficult. What would you do?
17. Tell me about a time when others resisted or rejected your ideas or actions. How did you respond?
18. What do you think are the best and worst parts of working in a team environment?  
Independently?
19. How would your past employers describe your response to stressful situations?

**Tell me about a time when you...**

- Were disappointed in your performance.
- Did not handle a stressful situation well.
- Were especially creative in solving a problem.
- Organized and planned an event that was very successful.
- Used facts to persuade someone to accept your recommendation.
- Were able to build team spirit in a time of low morale.
- Built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions.
- Had to make a decision you knew would be unpopular.
- Made a mistake and learned from it.
- Felt you were treated unfairly. What was the problem and how did you handle it?



# INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

## for Student Employees

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Rater's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

In a structured interview, a set of job-related interview questions are developed and asked of all the candidates. This provides all candidates with the same opportunity to display their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Interviewee responses are scored against a pre-determined scoring matrix (e.g., a scale of one to five with response examples for each level). Structured interviews are based on questions that are directly linked to the job duties and responsibilities. This increases the chances of a successful hire. Questions must be in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Minnesota Human Rights Act (M.S. 363A), and other applicable laws.

**Instructions:**  
Select interview questions that are position related and enter those into the Question column. During the interview, take notes on what the candidate is saying and document responses in the Interview Notes column. All notes should be professional focused on the candidate's responses. Following the interview use the Ratings column to document your observation of the candidate's ability and capacity to fulfill and successfully perform the functions of the position.

The panel members may discuss the applicant responses, however, the panel members need not agree on points awarded. Each interview must be scored. The applicant's final score will be determined by dividing the aggregate score by the number of panel members.

Question: <i>(type your interview questions in this column)</i>	Interview Notes: <i>(use this space for taking notes during interview)</i>	Rating: <i>0 – 4 (low – high)</i>
1. EXAMPLE: Please tell us why you are interested in this position?		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

--	--	--

(Press tab for a new row and to continue numbering for additional interview questions)

**RATING SCALE**

- 0 = No answer or examples provided or answer and/or examples were irrelevant. Failed to demonstrate competency.
- 1 = Minimal points covered with main issues missed. No examples or irrelevant examples provided. Competency inconsistently demonstrated.
- 2 = Some points covered with relevant examples provided. Competency demonstrated in some areas.
- 3 = Most points covered with relevant examples. Competency demonstrated in most areas.
- 4 = All points covered, including relevant examples. Competency demonstrated accurately, consistently and independently.