

## Preparing for the Interview

Being thoroughly prepared for an interview will help you conduct this important meeting. In an effort to ensure that your time is spent effectively with your candidates, outline your goals and objectives and be sure to familiarize yourself with the applicant's resume and associated application materials prior to the interviews.

Prepare your key interview questions beforehand, and keep these questions consistent among all candidates. Interview questions should be designed to gather as much information about the applicant as possible. It is also important to be aware of federal and state laws regarding appropriate and legal interview questions. Compliance with federal and state employment laws to ensure that the University's hiring policies and procedures are followed is also your responsibility and is critical to this process.

Please refer to the Pre-interview Guide section of this document to assist you in preparing for your interviews; Appropriate vs. Inappropriate Interview Questions, Sample Interview Questions, and Questions You May be Asked sections.

## Helpful Hints on Interviewing

Interviewing is an art, not a science. Take time to make sure this process is a success by doing the following:

- **Create a comfortable interviewing environment that welcomes all candidates.** Select an interview location that ensures privacy and is free from distractions.
- **Use open-ended questions as much as possible.** You want to encourage dialogue. Instead of asking "Can you manage multiple tasks simultaneously?" try "Give me an example of a time when you were required to manage multiple tasks simultaneously."
- **Ask questions that don't suggest the answer you're looking for.** Try to avoid leading questions. Instead of asking "Do you think you can delegate responsibility effectively?" try "Give me an example of a responsibility you delegated effectively and its result."
- **Ask questions which encourage the candidate to speak freely.** Ask questions, don't make statements. Try to avoid the cross-examination or interrogation technique. If your questions are interpreted as accusatory, abrupt or judgmental, you may discourage the candidate from providing valuable information.
- **Ask questions whose answers cannot be rehearsed.** Consider asking "Give me an example of a project or initiative that did not go well and how you handled the situation."
- **Include a question about working with diverse constituents and colleagues or a question about how to improve inclusion and address inequities based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.**
- **Listen carefully to the candidate's responses.** You can take appropriate notes while the candidate is talking so these notes can be used later in the hiring process to recollect key aspects of the interview and/or candidate. Keep all notes professional and job-related.
- **Control the interview.** Although the interview is the opportunity for the candidate to "sell" him/herself, don't let the candidate control the interview. Maintain control of this meeting to ensure you get all your questions asked and answered. Candidates who stray off the subject should be reigned back in verbally. Candidates who start asking you questions before you are ready to answer them should also be brought back on target verbally.
- **Collect as much information about the candidate as possible** before making a decision.
- **Let the candidate do most of the talking.** Remember the 80/20 rule. Talk no more than 20% of the time. You want as much information about the candidate as you can collect during the interview.
- **Close the interview on a positive note.** Thank the candidate for his/her interest in the position and the University of Hartford. Let the candidate know the next steps in the process as well as the expected timeframe for making the hiring decision. **SELECT, DON'T SETTLE!** Be intentional in your search process, recognizing that your human capital is your most important resource. Building a diverse and inclusive workplace where differences in perspective and approach to problem solving create more successful organizations.

### Pre-Interview Guide

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Review of Resume**

List items of interest from the resume and why they are of interest.

### **Open the Interview and Establish Rapport**

- Warm, friendly greeting.
- Names are important - yours and the candidate's. Pronounce the first and last name correctly. If you are unsure how to pronounce the name, ask.

### **Topics to be Covered in the Interview**

- Education: Review the candidate's education.
- Work History: Review the candidate's work history.
- Job Preview: Explain the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the job.
- Miscellaneous: Ask any other questions of relevance to the position being filled.

### **Rate Yourself**

- Preparation: Did I review the resume prior to the interview?  
Did I list and review my questions?  
Did my planning prevent interruptions?  
Did I clearly state my interviewing goals?
- Discussion: Did I listen more than talk?  
Did I take notes without causing discomfort to the candidate?  
Did I avoid interrupting the candidate?  
Did I read and make note of the candidate's verbal and non-verbal communication cues?  
Did I send appropriate non-verbal messages, including eye contact?
- Close: Did I describe the job in detail?  
Did I discuss career potential realistically?  
Did I ask for more questions?  
Did I thank the candidate and end the interview on a positive note?
- Summary: Did I immediately take 10-15 minutes to summarize the interview?  
Did I immediately rate my impression of the candidate?

## Pre-Employment Questions - Appropriate vs. Inappropriate to Ask

As a hiring manager, you have a legal responsibility to that ensure the questions you ask candidates are only job-related and nondiscriminatory in nature. In order to avoid inquiries that are, or may be perceived as, discriminatory, please review the following list of appropriate and not appropriate questions to ask.

	Appropriate to Ask	Not Appropriate to Ask
<b>Name</b>	Applicant's first, middle and last name	If a woman is a Miss, Mrs. or Ms., or for maiden name
<b>Address</b>	Applicant's address and telephone number, or alternate address and telephone number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any specific probes into foreign addresses which would indicate national origin</li> <li>Length of time at present address</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	Requiring acceptable original documentation as specified by law to establish identity and authorization to work in the United States <i>after hiring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requiring birth certificate or other proof of age <i>before hiring</i></li> <li>Age or age group prior to employment</li> </ul>
<b>Marital Status</b>	None	Any inquiry into marital status
<b>Dependents</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any inquiry into spouse's name</li> <li>Any inquiry into number or ages of applicant's children or dependents</li> </ul>
<b>Birthplace or national origin</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birthplace of applicant, applicant's parents, grandparents or spouse</li> <li>Any other inquiry into national origin</li> </ul>
<b>Race or color</b>	None. Inquiry for affirmative action plan statistics <i>after hiring</i>	Any inquiry that would indicate race or color
<b>Gender</b>	None. Inquiry for affirmative action plan statistics <i>after hiring</i>	Any inquiry that would indicate gender
<b>Religion</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any inquiry into applicant's religious denomination, church or religious observations</li> <li>Recommendations or references from religious affiliations</li> </ul>
<b>Disability</b>	Ability to perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation	Any inquiry into the nature and/or severity of the applicant's disability

	Appropriate to Ask	Not Appropriate to Ask
<b>Citizenship</b>	“If hired, can you show proof of authorization to work in the United States?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of citizenship</li> <li>• Date of citizenship</li> <li>• Whether applicant, applicant’s parents or applicant’s spouse is native-born or naturalized</li> </ul>
<b>Photographs</b>	None. May be required for identification purposes <b>after hiring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any request for photograph before hiring</li> <li>• Do not take pictures of applicant during the interview</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	Questions concerning academic, professional or vocational schools attended	Questions specifically regarding nationality, racial or religious affiliation of any school attended
<b>Salary/Wage History</b>	None	Any inquiry into prior job compensation
<b>Language</b>	Inquiry into language skills, such as reading, writing and/or speaking of foreign languages if job-related	Inquiry into the applicant’s mother tongue or how any foreign language ability was acquired
<b>Relatives</b>	Name and address of a person to be notified in case of an emergency <b>after hiring</b>	Any inquiry into names, addresses, ages, etc. of spouse, children or any relatives
<b>Organization Membership</b>	Organizational or professional memberships and/or offices held (if any) so long as affiliation is not used to discriminate on the basis of any protected class under applicable law	Listing of all clubs applicant belongs to or has belonged to
<b>Military Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service in the U.S. Armed Forces, including branch and rank attained as part of work experience history</li> <li>• Any job-related experience</li> <li>• Military discharge certification <b>after hiring</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military service records</li> <li>• Military service for any country other than U.S.</li> <li>• Type of discharge</li> <li>• Membership in Reserves</li> <li>• Intent to join military</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Record</b>	Inquiry into convictions (except for traffic violations) if job-related	Any inquiry into arrests, criminal charges or convictions that were erased
<b>Work Schedule</b>	Willingness and/or ability to work the required work schedule	Willingness and/or ability to work on any particular religious holiday or observance
<b>References</b>	Applicant may be asked for professional and/or personal references	References specifically from any person which might reflect race, color, religion, gender, national origin or ancestry
<b>Other qualifications</b>	Any question that has direct correlation to the job	Any non-job-related inquiry that may present information permitting unlawful discrimination.

# Sample Interview Questions

## **Inclusive Excellence**

- What kinds of experiences have you had in relating to people whose backgrounds are different than yours?
- What does it mean to have a commitment to inclusive excellence and how would you develop and/or apply your commitment to our university?
- What initiatives have you been involved in to bring differing perspectives together to get a result that benefited you? The involved parties? The organization?
- Describe how you would work to help create/foster a campus environment that is welcoming and inclusive.
- What is your ideal work environment?

## **Decision Making and Problem Solving**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in reaching a decision. How did you handle it?
- What would you do if your supervisor made a decision which you strongly disagreed with?
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to diffuse a difficult situation.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to refrain from speaking or making a decision because you did not have enough information.

## **Communication**

- Describe your communication style.
- Tell me about a situation when you had to be assertive and speak up in order to get a point across that was important to you.
- Have you ever had to “sell” an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? What was the outcome?
- What interpersonal qualities or personal experiences make you the best person for this job?

## **Interpersonal Skills**

- How do you capitalize on your strengths?
- How do you compensate for any areas that you feel you can improve upon?
- Describe the type of work you most enjoy and the environment that you feel most comfortable working in.
- Describe a boss who would get the very best work from you.

## **Planning and Organization**

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

## **Motivation**

- How do you prefer to be managed and given direction?
- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond in a prior job.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
- What do you plan to be doing five years from now? And how does this job relate to these future goals/plans?
- Describe how your last/previous job prepares you for this job.
- Tell me how you learn best at a new task or new job.
- If hired, how long do you think it would take you to be up and running?

## **Leadership**

- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a situation when you had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas. What was your approach? Did it work?

## **General questions**

- Describe two or three major trends in your profession today.
- Give me an example of a goal which you set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- Discuss the committees on which you have served and the impact of these committees on the organization where you worked.
- Why did you choose this profession/field?
- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- If I called your last supervisor, what would he/she tell me about your work?
- If you could have changed one thing about your last job/company, what would that have been?
- How much notice would you have to give your present employer?

## Questions You May be Asked

The interview process involves two-way communication. Encourage the applicant to ask questions. The questions an applicant asks can define and/or measure interest and compatibility within your department and at the University of Hartford.

A prepared applicant may ask any (or all) of the following questions:

- Why is this position vacant?
- How large is the department, and to whom would I report?
- What are some of the main responsibilities of this position?
- Is the salary negotiable?
- What are your immediate goals for the person who fills this position?
- What do you expect me to accomplish in the first 30, 60, 90 days?
- What are your short-term and/or long-term objectives for this position?
- How closely would I be supervised?
- Can you describe your management style?
- What equipment would I use? Would I be trained if it were unfamiliar to me?
- What is a typical day like in this position?
- How are people promoted out of this job? Where do they typically go?
- What is the most important skill needed to do this job well?
- What do you value most in an employee?
- What are the common attributes of your top performers?
- How are employees rewarded in the department and at the University?
- How do you characterize the University's culture?
- What are you looking for in a successful candidate?
- Do you expect to have second interviews?
- Do you have a targeted start date?
- When will I hear from you again?
- Be honest! It is important to give a realistic preview of the job in order to find the right person for your open position.