

Identify Top Candidates

(from Chapter 6 of Hiring Right: Conducting Successful Searches in Higher Education, by Sandra Hochel and Charmaine E. Wilson)

Tips for Writing Questions

Do:

- Have a set of standardized questions you ask of each candidate.
- Ask mostly behavioral questions.
- Know why you are asking each question.
- Ask only job related questions.
- Probe for full information.

Don't:

- Ask questions with obvious answers.
- Ask leading questions.
- Ask overused questions.
- Ask too many closed questions.
- Ask for personal information.

Sample Interview Questions

Quality of Past Work:

- What do you think were some of your greatest accomplishments in your last job? Greatest disappointments or frustrations?
- In what ways did you contribute to the success of your unit at your last job?
- Tell me about a time when you needed outside help and had to ask someone for assistance. What was the situation? How did you decide whom to consult?
- We contact applicants' past employers. What do you think your past employers will say about your performance?
- Recall a time when you saw something that needed to be done in your organization and you stepped up and handled it.
- Recall a time when a coworker or supervisor criticized your work. What was the situation and how did you respond?

Ability to Work Well With Others:

- Tell me about your experience working on teams. (Probe for details because no one is going to say that they don't work well with others.)
- Tell us about a time when you helped out a colleague at work.
- When do you have difficulty communicating with others?
- Recall a time when you had to deal with a difficult coworker. What was the situation? How did you handle it? How was the relationship affected?
- What are some of the things you and your supervisor agreed about? Disagreed about?
- How do you feel your supervisor could have done an even better job?

Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills:

- In your role as _____, what was the hardest decision you ever had to make?
- What are some things your department could do to be more successful? How would you go about implementing such improvements?
- Suppose you found that a student had plagiarized a small part of a final paper. What would you do?
- If you encountered this problem (describe a specific situation an employee might be expected to deal with), how would you handle it?
- If you could make one suggestion to higher administration at _____ University, what would it be?
- Describe a difficult problem that you had to resolve in your last job. How did you handle it? What did you learn from it?

Ability to Set and Accomplish Goals:

- If you could select an ideal working environment (or job), what would it be like? What are some things you would most want to avoid? Why?
- What would you look forward to in the future if you joined us? What additional education and training do you think you would need to reach your goals?
- Tell me about an innovation you introduced in your current workplace. What was it? How did you get the change made?

- What aspect of your work do you consider most crucial?
- How do you promote integrity in your unit/classroom?
- No one is perfect. Tell us about a time you changed your work behavior because of feedback you received from a coworker or boss.

Ability to Manage Unit/Classroom:

- How have you successfully motivated employees/students?
- How have you created a climate conducive to productivity/learning?
- How have you met the individual needs of subordinates/students?
- Tell us about a situation where your subordinates/students taught you an important lesson.
- Recall a program/course you designed. Describe step by step what you did and how it turned out.
- Tell us about a time when you had to talk with a subordinate whose work was below average. What were the circumstances? How did you deal with it? What was the result?