

# ETHICAL INTERVIEW

## QUESTION TIPS

*Ethical interview questions, which involve ethical dilemmas and situations involving morality, are used across all industries as well as in graduate school admissions interviews. They give the interviewer a preview of how the candidate is likely to handle future ethical problems. Answers provide insight into the moral standards of the interviewee and how they compare to the values of the organization.*

### Types of Ethical Interview Questions

- Candid Questions**
  - Candid ethical interview questions require an interviewee to describe explicit ethical qualities or behaviors. Examples of these questions may include:
    - What do you consider to be your most ethical qualities?
    - What are examples of ethical and unethical behaviors?
    - What ethical qualities and behaviors do you feel are essential in this industry/field?
- Behavioral Questions**
  - Behavioral ethical interview questions require an interviewee to recall a specific time during which they faced an ethical dilemma, then explain how they handled the situation. Examples of these questions may include:
    - Tell me about a time you faced an ethical dilemma.
    - When you've had ethical issues arise at work, whom did you consult?
    - Describe a specific instance during which you were asked to do something unethical or advised to lie about something. Elaborate on how you handled the situation and why you responded the way you did.
- Situational Questions**
  - Situational ethical interview questions are hypothetical questions that ask the interviewee how they would handle given scenarios. Examples of these questions include:
    - Suppose you caught your friend cheating on an exam. What would you do?
    - Your supervisor gives you a direct order that you know is against company policy. What do you do? What if the order was illegal?
    - You are sitting in a coffee shop and witness a stranger being verbally harassed by another individual with whom they appear to have a defined relationship. The individual is visibly upset and distraught, but the harasser continues to attack them. What do you do?

### How to Answer Ethical Interview Questions

*The general rule-of-thumb for answering ethical interview questions is to emphasize the importance of ethics and morals by including the reasons why ethics are important in each answer you provide. Avoid saying that you have never experienced an ethical dilemma, as we have each had our moral standards challenged at some point. It is important to convey to the interviewer both the situations you faced and how you handled them in as compelling a way as possible.*

- Candid Question Tips**
  - Research the mission and ethical ideals of the company/program and include references to these in your answers. This will show the interviewer how you fit in with their values.
  - Incorporate examples from your own experience to strengthen your answers. These can come from your personal, academic, and/or professional career, but should never come from your private life.
  - Include reasons why ethics are important in your answer. In other words, be sure to explain why the qualities or behaviors you listed are important to have in the workplace/field.

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## Behavioral Question Tips

- Isolate a specific instance during which your ethics were challenged and be able to explain the situation, your task, the actions you took, the end result, and how it relates to the particular company/program you are interviewing for.
- Choose a specific instance from your professional or academic career. It is acceptable to use personal examples of situations involving family and friends if needed, but be sure to avoid sharing private details. You will also want to avoid naming particular individuals, especially past employers, in your answer.
- Describe the problem-solving abilities you used to make the judgment call on ethics, if applicable. Explaining how you came to choose what you determined to be the correct moral route will give the interviewer a sense of your critical thinking abilities, which are important in any position.

*Review the STARR Method section of the CCD Interview Preparation Guide for more on approaching behavioral questions.*

## Situational Question Tips

- Put yourself in the hypothetical situation and explain the thought process you would use to make a judgment call.
- When answering questions about ethical dilemmas, it is important to acknowledge both points of view. However, be sure to decisively choose one point of view to support and explain why you chose that path. This is another way problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills can be incorporated into an answer. If there are any legal issues involved, be sure to address those as well.
- Showcase important moral and ethical values you possess that are relevant to the hypothetical situation. It might be beneficial to include some of the company/program's values and their importance within your answers.
- Be sure to think about and articulate all present and future implications of your decision. For instance, reporting a friend who cheated on their exam could damage your friendship, but could also prevent that individual from potentially harming their future company/program due to lack of applied knowledge.