



Common Questions Asked by Employers

While you can never be 100% sure what interviewers will ask you, it is always important to think about your answers to the most common questions. Once you've put some thought into how you would answer a particular question, write down the key elements of your answer, and then practice answering the question aloud with friends, family, or a career counselor.

During an interview, listen carefully to what the interviewer is asking. If the question is unclear, ask for clarification. While it's important to keep your answers focused and on-topic, you also want some of your personality and passion for the job to shine through.

The most common interview questions are listed below. To build your skills, contact us to schedule a practice interview, or check out Big Interview, accessible from the Career Connections website.

Personal

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
- Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
- What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
- Describe your ideal job.
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
- What is one weakness that you have?
- What is your definition of success?
- Tell me about a time when you failed at something. What did you learn?*
- What is one accomplishment that you are most proud of?
- Who has been a role model for you, and why?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Describe your ideal supervisor.

Education

- Why did you choose your major?
- Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- Which classes did you like best? Least?
- If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
- Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?
- What plans do you have for furthering your education?

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Handout adapted from UMass Lowell Career & Co-op Center:
Career-Related Classroom Assignments



Experience

- What job-related skills have you developed?
- Did you work while going to school? If so, in what positions?
- What have you learned from your work (or internship or co-op) experiences?
- Have you done any volunteer work? What kind?
- What did you enjoy most (and least) about your last job (or internship or co-op)?
- Have you ever quit a job? Why?
- How do you think your former supervisor would describe you?
- Give me an example of a time when you provided a solution to an employer.*
- Tell me about a time when you worked under deadline pressure.*
- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team where there were disagreements about how to meet goals and objectives.*
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer.*
- Give me an example of a time when you needed to work on several assignments or tasks simultaneously.*

Flexibility

- Would you be able and willing to work overtime/flex-time if necessary?
- Would you be able and willing to travel for this job?
- Would you be able and willing to relocate if necessary?

* These are “behavioral” questions. See our handout on Behavioral Interviewing for detailed information to successfully prepare to answer these types of questions.

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